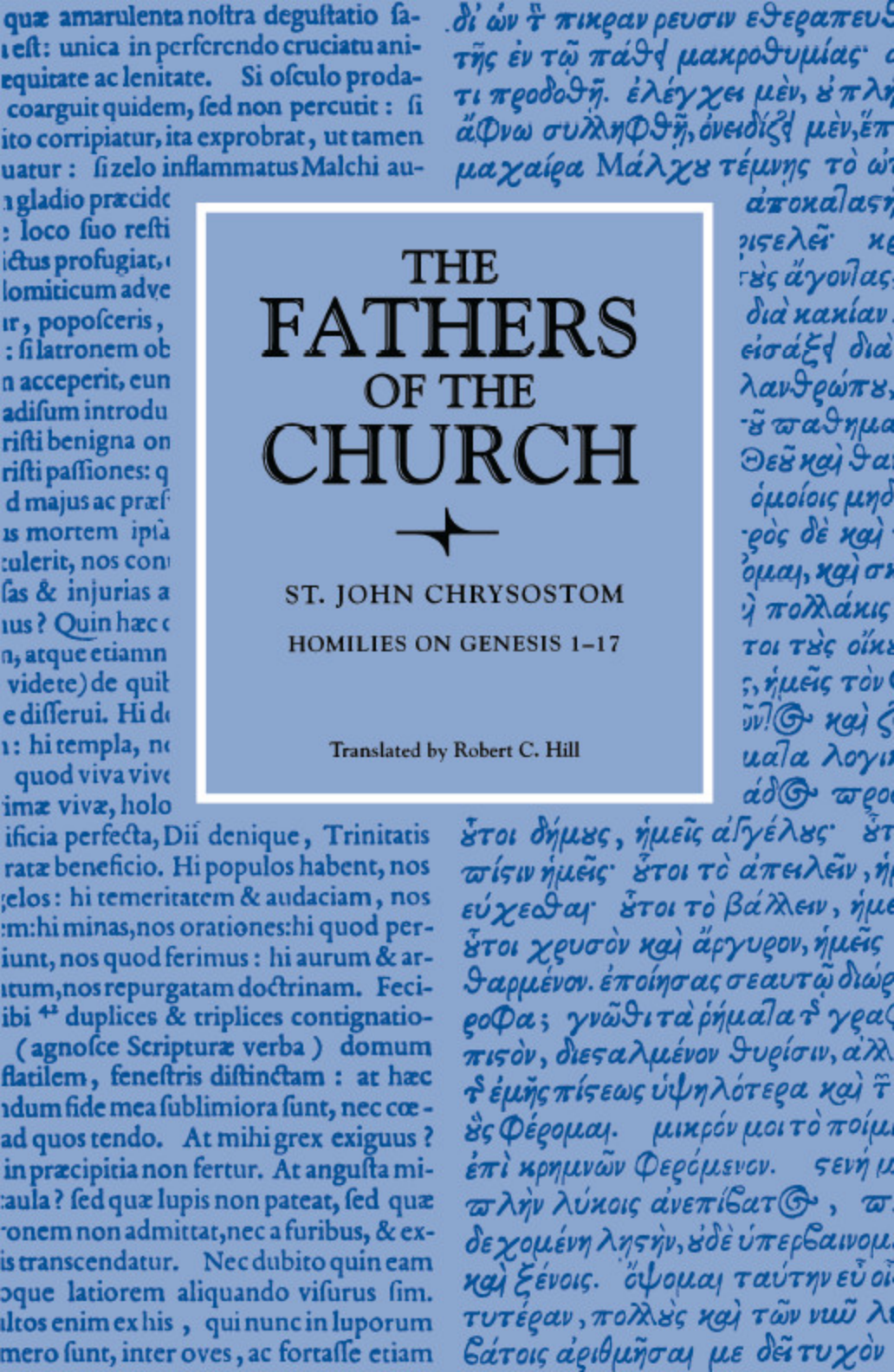
THE
FATHERS
OF THE
CHURCH
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM
HOMILIES ON GENESIS 1–17
Translated by Robert C. Hill

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 74

THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

A NEW TRANSLATION

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SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

HOMILIES ON GENESIS

1–17

Translated by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (Rome, 1909ff.)
Bibl	*Biblica* (Roma)
CCG	*Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca* (Turnhout, 1974)
CleR	*Clergy Review*
CPG	M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. II (Turnhout, 1974)
Dict. Bibl., Suppl.	*Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Supplément ed. L. Pirot (1928ff.)
EB	*Estudios Biblicos*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
ODCC^2	*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed. F. L. Cross
PG	Migne, J. P., ed. *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca* 161 vols. (Paris 1857–1866)
SC	*Sources Chrétiennes*, ed. H. de Lubac et J. Daniélou, (Paris, 1942—)
SP	*Studia Patristica*. International Conference on Patristic Studies at Oxford (TU) (Berlin)
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
VigC	*Vigiliae Christianae* (Amsterdam)

INTRODUCTION

HIS IS THE FIRST of several volumes containing the series of 67 homilies composed by St John Chrysostom on the entire book of *Genesis*. Before the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when those editions of the homilies appeared on which our present text rests, the *Genesis* series had been thought to contain only 61 homilies, but fortunately the missing ones have been recovered.[1] This first volume, for reasons of length, contains the first seventeen homilies, bringing Chrysostom's commentary up to *Gn* chapter 3 verse 19, a significant enough moment but so early in his text as to suggest that, as often happens with preachers, he will have to increase his pace to treat of the whole book, which is his intention. Later volumes will complete the remaining three-quarters of the series of homilies.

(2) In addition to this series of 67 homilies, there is extant another small series of 9 sermons on *Genesis* by Chrysostom. The first 8 of these comment likewise (though more generally) on the early chapters of *Gn*, and in places the resemblance is verbatim. The ninth seems somewhat different, but because of its patriarchal material has been placed with this short series. These sermons are not translated in the present work.

1. B. De Montfaucon, whose text and introduction J. P. Migne reproduces in his 1858–60 Paris edition, debates the testimony of Photius, ninth century scholar and successor of Chrysostom in the see of Constantinople, to the number 61; the internal evidence of the present Homily 33, which acknowledges that an intermission had occurred after Holy Week till Pentecost, suggests that Photius has lost five homilies when he claims that only 27 were delivered during Lent.

CHRYSOSTOM'S EXEGETICAL WORKS

(3) The life of this great preacher of Antioch and Constantinople of the late fourth century has been adequately sketched in the previous volumes of the *Fathers of the Church* series devoted to Chrysostom's work,[2] not to mention Dom Chrysostom Baur's monumental study.[3] Only some especially relevant features need highlighting here in view of the particular character of the *Gn* homilies and Chrysostom's role as exegete/commentator/preacher. Firstly, Chrysostom stands within the patristic school of Antioch—and stands high, though perhaps not so influential a figure as Theodore of Mopsuestia—and thus represents an exegetical tradition resting firmly on the literal sense of Scripture as opposed to the Alexandrian school's relish for the allegorical sense.[4] Secondly, Chrysostom's grounding in biblical studies was at the hands of Diodore of Tarsus, who, though a distinguished exegete now known from extant fragments of commentaries on *Genesis* and *Psalms* (the OT books Chrysostom also devoted most attention to),[5] himself had no Hebrew and so could not introduce Chrysostom to exegesis of the Hebrew text of those books[6]—a most significant fact for our present work, of course. Thirdly, as I have outlined elsewhere,[7] the society

2. *Homilies of the Gospel of St. John*, translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (*FOTC* 33, 41; 1957, 1960); *Discourses Against Judaizing Christians* translated by Paul W. Harkins (*FOTC* 68; 1979); *St. John Chrysostom On the Incomprehensible Nature of God*, translated by Paul W. Harkins (*FOTC*, 72; 1984); *St. John Chrysostom Apologist*, translated by Paul W. Harkins and Margaret Shatkin (*FOTC*, 73; 1985).

3. D. C. Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time* (I 1929, II 1930 (ET London-Glasgow) 1959, 1960.

4. Cf. G. Bardy, "Interprétation chez les pères," *Dict.Bibl.,Suppl.* IV (Paris, 1949) 569–91; A. Vaccari, "La theoria nella scuola esegetica di Antiochia," *Bibl.* 1 (1920) 3–36. See also B. Drewery, "Antiochien" in *TRE* III 99–113.

5. Diodore's commentary on Psalms (*PG* 33.1587-1628) in *CCG*, VI *Commentarii in Psalmos* I-L by Jean Marie Oliver (Turnhout, 1980).

6. As H. von Campenhausen points out in the *Greek Fathers* (1955) (ET London, 1963) 143. "Chrysostom's own admission of his limitations here appears in Homily 4 in clarifying the significance of Hebrew "heaven(s)", where he says, 'Those who know that language say . . .'"

7. R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* (Sydney, 1981) 27–44.

of the Antioch of the day was swirling with many currents and a prey to all sorts of cultural influences—pagan, Jewish, heretical, sophist; as preacher with developing pastoral responsibility (though perhaps not yet ordained when he delivered the *Gn* homilies) Chrysostom is most anxious to alert his congregation to the dangers to be encountered,[8] and his polemical manner in this regard can arise from pastoral conscientiousness (nevertheless earning Baur's label of "Die Polemiker").[9]

(4) Chrysostom's extant works outnumber those of any other Father of the East; in the West, Augustine alone is his peer. Predictably for such a zealous preacher and pastor, most of these works are oratorical, even if his treatises on priesthood and other states of life in the Church are well known and much translated. While the manuscript tradition for these works is abundant, there is still much work to be done in deciding on the authenticity of many other works attributed to this illustrious figure.[10] The bulk of Chrysostom's oratorical works are exegetical, over 600 pieces of exegesis/commentary on books of Old and New Testaments, mostly delivered as homilies in Antioch from 385.

(5) Partly for linguistic reasons, partly by preference for authors like Paul, for whom Chrysostom obviously had a warm regard, the New Testament received most frequent attention, though the *Genesis* series seems to have been the earliest—perhaps out of deference to his master Diodore, himself like Chrysostom the author of series of homilies on this part of the Bible. The Old Testament homilies that we seem to be able to accept as authentic number 150: a series of 9 on *Genesis*, our

8. Cf. Homily 2 (warning against Mani, Marcion, Valentinus, pagans, and the *logismoi* of rationalists), Hom.8 (the Jews), Hom.17 (the Anthropomorphites). Cf. his commentary on *Ps* 110 (*PG* 53,264B) where he tilts at the Jews, Paul of Samosata, Arius, Marcion, Mani—all for Christological errors.

9. Baur I, 330.

10. For the present state of the question, cf. M. Geerard, *CPG* II (Turnhout, 1974) *Dubia et Spuria* 4500-4713; J. Quasten, *Patrology* III, 429f; J. A. de Almada, *Repertorium pseudo-chrysostomicum* (Paris, 1965) and S. J. Voicu, "Le corpus pseudo-chrysostomien Questiones préliminaires et état des recherches," *SP* XVII (1982) 1198–1205.

series of 67 on *Genesis*, 5 on Anna, 3 on David and Saul, 58 on *Psalms*, 6 on *Isaiah* ch.6 (sometimes known as 'in Oziam,' and the first of Chrysostom's OT homilies to appear in a modern critical edition),[11] and 2 entitled *De Obscuritate Prophetiarum* (which are rather examples of treatises than exegesis, but they do allow Chrysostom to articulate his thinking on the OT).

(6) There are thus two major series of homilies by Chrysostom on the Old Testament, one on *Genesis*, another on *Psalms*. Quasten flatly declares the latter "by far the best," though admitting we probably don't have them in their original form. A reader of both series, however, finds these much less inspiring than the *Genesis* series, which could never be described as "pedestrian, mechanical, desultory."[12] I am in no doubt that the *Gn* series deserves translation for its importance in the history of exegesis. The *Psalms* series can come later.

(7) In addition to the present series of 67 homilies on *Genesis*, therefore, there is also that short series of 9 'sermons' on the same book. The question immediately arises: why two series? why the difference in name between 'homily' and 'sermon'? how did the occasional verbatim similarity arise? The eighteenth century editor De Montfaucon gives to each of the 67 the heading *homilia* and to the 9 (as well as to the 5 on Anna) *logos*, but Chrysostom in his text seems to use only the latter term. F. Cayré distinguishes homilies—series of instructions on entire or almost entire books of Scripture—from exegetical sermons on isolated passages of Scripture.[13] Quasten refers to both as 'homiliae'.[14] Baur suggests that the 9 sermons alone were actually delivered, whereas the 67 homilies are only Chrysostom's text prepared for delivery but not actually preached in their present form (though stylistic evidence

11. *Homélies sur Ozias* (*SC* 277), ed. and trans. by J. Dumortier (Paris, 1981); *Commentaire sur Isaie* (*SC* 304), ed. and trans. by J. Dumortier (Paris, 1983) which, if authentic, may be only a dehomileticized form of the above.

12. Words used to describe a whole sequence of 18 homilies beginning with *Ps* 120(119) in my earlier study: R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* (Sydney, 1981) 16–20.

13. *Patrologie et Histoire de la Théologie* I, Paris 1953, 546–47.

14. *Patrology* III, 434.

would not support this, I feel). Much of this discussion could be said to be guesswork and perhaps of no moment anyhow. Quasten probably has the last word with this caution: "Most of his voluminous Scriptural expositions do not provide enough clues to determine the time of composition or delivery or even their exact order. Some of them might have been published only in written form without having ever been preached."[15] As to the close textual resemblance at times between sermons and homilies (cf. Sermon 2 and Homily 8, for instance), one wonders if we have different versions of an oration delivered on one occasion, or a slight re-tailoring for different occasions. W. A. Markowicz has addressed the problem, considered various solutions, and settled for the obvious one: "Partial repetitions triggered by similarity of circumstance are no surprise to any teacher-preacher of many years."[16] My own conclusion would be that the two series differ in purpose if not in basic material, one occasional, the other (the Homilies) progressively exegetical.

(8) Can we be sure when and where the 67 Homilies on *Genesis* were delivered? Quasten, despite that caution of his against a false search for precision, pinpoints them flatly: "at Antioch during Lent 386."[17] This somewhat contradicts the internal evidence of Homily 33, which, as De Montfaucon's careful argument demonstrates, admits a break in the series after Homily 32 to allow for Easter ceremonies and other sermons on Judas, the Resurrection and the *Acts* right up to Pentecost, when the *Genesis* series resumes. With equally microscopic examination of the text of the *Genesis* and *Acts* homilies, De Montfaucon seizes on references to the Jews (Homily 12 on *Gn*), to the name of a church in Antioch (Homily 2 on *Acts*), to the races (Homily 6 on *Gn*), and arrives at an open verdict on a date, except to eliminate 386 (the year of 8

15. *Ibid.*

16. Markowicz, W. A. "Chrysostom's sermons on Genesis: a problem," *JTS* 24 (1963) 652–64, in which he refers to other cases of resemblance in Chrysostom's works.

17. Quasten, *Patrology* III, 434. Cayré, *Patrologie*, 546f, equally flatly assigns the homilies to 388, after the sermons in 386. Altaner/Stuiber, *Patrologie*, 324, agrees ". . . wahrscheinlich 388 gehalten."

of the Sermons on *Gn*) and 387, but he is definite about Antioch as the place. So perhaps it is wisest to adopt Quasten's caution again more cautiously than he did himself, and conclude: the Homilies on *Genesis* seem to have been delivered in Antioch, perhaps as early as the year 385, half just before and during Lent, the remainder (from Homily 33 onwards) after Pentecost. If that early date were established, they would have been given by John the deacon, Chrysostom's ordination to priesthood occurring only in 386, and would thus represent his oratorical debut (not that they betray the tentative manner of a beginner).

(9) With the exception of the *Sources Chrétiennes* editions of the 6 *Isaiah* homilies,[18] there have been no modern critical editions of Chrysostom's Old Testament homilies. The *Corpus Christianorum* of Turnhout has just begun its *Series Graeca*, but at least the Belgians have continued to make available through photographic reproduction Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* of 1857–66, which itself re-edited the eighteenth century edition of Chrysostom's works by the Benedictines under Bernhard De Montfaucon. Since expert opinion differs as to whether or not De Montfaucon's edition is to be preferred to Henry Savile's Oxford edition of 1612 for accuracy,[19] we have in the Migne reprint (thanks to Brepols) an adequate text for translation (*PG* 53 and 54 containing the *Genesis* homilies), and can with less impatience await from today's critical editors the courage required to face the not inconsiderable challenge of editing all Chrysostom's OT homilies.

(10) What, then, has prevented the translation of these homilies into English? Presumably, for one thing, their bulk: being the best represented Greek Father carries its own disadvantages. Yet bulk did not discourage the two great nineteenth century translation projects at Oxford (*Library of the Fathers*) and in the United States (*A Select Library of Nicene and*

18. Cf. note 11 above.

19. Quasten, *Patrology* III, 430–31, and F. L. Cross, *ODCC*^{2} (London, 1974^2) 286, opt for Savile; B. Altaner and A. Stuiber, *Patrologie* (Freiburg, 1978^7) 324, and G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) ix, xvii, for De Montfaucon (who admits dependence on Savile but claims to have improved on him).

Post-Nicene Fathers, happily available also in reprint today) from attempting the triply daunting task offered by Chrysostom's New Testament homilies. The result is that there have been to date no English translations of the Old Testament homilies, though *Fathers of the Church* is now moving to adjust that imbalance (unlike other modern translation series like *ACW* and *The Library of Christian Classics*). There is surely some value judgement operating here: clearly editors in recent times have thought the golden-mouthed orator less weighty a commentator on the more remote material of *Genesis* or *Psalms* than on the Gospels or his beloved Paul.[20] This, I surmise, is not due to Chrysostom's relative degree of acquaintance with the language of the biblical text; rather, I am inclined to think an estimate was made of the relative attractiveness of the material and its relevance to theological themes judged most typical of Chrysostom's thought, such as Christology and the Sacraments. This is a pity: the *Genesis* homilies in particular have much to tell of Chrysostom as exegete/commentator/preacher/moralist/breaker of the bread of the Word generally, even if he has been judged not the most conspicuous representative of his school.[21] And even if it is true that he is "soucieux de tirer des écritures les leçons de morale à l'usage de ses auditeurs,"[22] even if he can live up to Baur's label of "Die Polemiker", he is also a profoundly theological commentator on the text with that tremendous respect for Scripture as the inspired Word of God that we associate with the Eastern Church (as we will demonstrate below).[23]

20. Similarly, and perhaps consequent upon the relative availability of NT and OT homilies in translation, the major studies of Chrysostom's exegetical works to date (by Haidacher, Chase, Fabbi, Flanagan, Vandenberghe, etc.) rely disproportionately on references to NT homilies.

21. Cf. Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952) 18: "The homilies of St John Chrysostom in translation were also read and appreciated (in the West). He was by far the best-known representative of Antiochene principles in the West and, at the same time, the author who could teach his readers least about Antiochene exegesis."

22. G. Bardy, "Interprétation," *Dict.Bibl.,Suppl.* 581.

23. Cf. R. Hill, "St John Chrysostom and the Incarnation of the Word in Scripture," *Compass Theology Review* 14 (1980) 34–38; R. E. Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (London, 1981) 22.

THE HOMILIST AND HIS CONGREGATION IN ANTIOCH

(11) Presuming that the *Genesis* homilies were delivered in Antioch before Chrysostom's elevation to the See of Constantinople in 398, we can deduce from the text something of the situation in which they were delivered and the congregation to whom they were addressed. If there is truth in the suggestion that Chrysostom was in the habit of moving from church to church to preach, this congregation nevertheless remained the same recipient of the 67 homilies, of which 32 had been delivered on the weekdays of Lent by the time that intermission for Easter came. From this fact, and from their considerable length, we conclude the homilies were not a minor component of an even longer daily liturgy. They commenced with the reading of the text of Scripture (from a variant of the Greek Septuagint version of the Hebrew OT, as we shall see below), which Chrysostom then began to comment on, verse by verse, word by word, even taking individual syllables, as was his manner and was evidently acceptable to his Antiochene congregation—except when he had something else particular to say, such as the opening exhortation on fasting (Homily 1) or that stinging rebuke of those who attended horse racing (Homily 6).[24] The members of the congregation seemed a typical group of lay people, from family situations, preoccupied with secular affairs, and yet prepared to assemble daily for a lengthy scriptural homily on a fairly empty stomach in Lent. They are not ignorant people: Chrysostom flatters them in Homily 19 with the ability to choose between variant interpretations of the difficult verse 4.8. They are presumed to be readers of Scripture at home: "I recommend you to have constant recourse to this remedy, and apply yourself diligently to the reading of Sacred Scripture, not only when you come along here, but at home, taking the sacred books in your hands and earnestly absorbing the benefit of their

24. R. Hill, "On giving up the horses for Lent," *CleR* 68 (March 1983) 105–106.

contents. The advantages stemming from this practice are manifold: . . ."[25]

So they are not, in Chrysostom's view and in keeping with his notion of scriptural inspiration, passive recipients of a one-way process. He sees inspiration affecting them and himself in various ways and in various situations: "If we have a precise realization of this, we will be able while relaxing at home, both before eating or after eating, to take the sacred books in our hands and gain benefit from them and provide spiritual nourishment for our soul. . . . This, after all, is the secret of our salvation, our spiritual riches, our security. If we defend ourselves in this way day by day, through reading, through listening, through spiritual discourse, we will be able to keep ourselves unharmed and render the devil's wiles ineffectual."[26]

Their role is not only to listen, but also to read and engage in spiritual discourse. He frequently envisages them leaving the church after his sermon to go home with their neighbors, and on the way reminiscing together on the day's theme, assisting one another in their recollection of it,[27] the better to understand it themselves as well as to teach and admonish others,[28] even to engage in controversy with them,[29] or perhaps mediating the subject matter to those absent.[30] Bible discussion groups at home are also part of their lifestyle.[31] Whatever of the turbulent religious currents of contemporary Antioch, this congregation led a quite intensely scriptural life.[32]

THE STRUCTURE OF THE HOMILIES

(12) As a homilist Chrysostom was not in the business of wasting the time of his listeners; they got good measure,

25. Homily 24; cf. 21.
26. Homily 10.
27. Homily 14.
28. Homily 14; 20.
29. Homily 8.
30. Homily 10.
31. Homily 6; 10.
32. For further detail, R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* 108–21.

whether they liked it or not. Newman could wax poetic on his oratorical style, others compare it to the Attic of Demosthenes;[33] certainly its flowing, meandering, even asyntactic periods discourage the impression the homilies were composed but never delivered. There was, however, little of the original and spectacular in the structure of the homilies—not surprising, in that there are 67 on the one book of the Bible. Normally, there was the opening reading of the day's verse(s). Chrysostom would then link the day's sermon with the previous day's, often through some such figure as the laying of a table; this could occasionally develop into a lengthy moral/dogmatic/polemical excursus unrelated to the *Gn* text and supported from other Scriptural loci. Then—sometimes with abruptness and difficulty after such a lengthy digression (disproportionate enough to discourage again an impression of perfect planning beforehand)—he would take up the day's text for exegesis/commentary.[34] Finally, after a substantial time on the text, he would move to a parenetic conclusion, quite perfunctorily done by way of "supplying you with the customary *paraklēsis*,"[35] and not always arising naturally from the exegetical material; by this stage patience might be wearing thin, especially as the homilies tended to get longer and longer, and he would feel the need to apologize (cf. Homilies 15,16,17,18,19)—though thankfully it was some such occasion that provided the beautiful rebuke about the lamplighter in Sermon 4 on *Gn*: "We are explaining the Scriptures to you, while you are turning your eyes away from us, and directing them instead to the lamps and the man lighting them. Such laziness! to turn away from us and attend to him. Here am I lighting the fire of Scripture, and the lamp of its teaching is enkindled on my lips . . ."[36]

33. Cf. P. J. Ryan, "Chrysostom—a derived stylist?" *VigC* 36 (1982) 5–14.

34. Homily 11 omits reference to *Gn* to deal with imitation of the saints and especially of Chrysostom's model, Paul, through extended commentary on 2 *Cor.*

35. Homily 7; cf. 20.

36. In the Isaiah homilies (Hom.4 *in Oziam: PG* 56,121a) there is the equally beautiful metaphor for the preaching on Scripture, where the congregation is compared to a ship's company embarking en route for heaven on

Finally and invariably, as became the pastor and theologian that he patently was, came the brief prayer for congregation and preacher, and the trinitarian doxology.

(13) To describe as exegetical homilies Chrysostom's treatment of *Genesis* and the other parts of the Old Testament is to stretch the definition somewhat; as his contemporary Julian of Eclanum observed, his mediation of the Scriptures was "rather by exhortation than by exposition" (*PL* 21,960). This was partly due to a judgement about his pastoral role and the needs of his congregation: they got what he thought they needed, even if at times not in keeping with the stage of development of the *Genesis* text—such as a lecture on the evils of the race-course, or many reminders of the efficacy of fasting during Lent. His advocacy of fasting does admit of distinction: those who cannot abstain from food can pray, give alms, read the Bible;[37] prompt response to the basic moral imperative is pointed out as "real fasting" in case mere abstinence be seen as a fetish[38]—sound advice from a one-time addict. Beyond that, his moral exhortation centers on several well-worn themes. Most prominent in this series on *Genesis*, perhaps because of his diagnosis of the sin of Adam and Eve as *rhathumia*, "indifference/carelessness/sloth,"[39] is the Christian life as a dialectic with indifference and enthusiasm (*prothumia*) as the two opposites.[40] Other chestnuts include the dialectic between truth and error/deception/the devil's wiles, and as a corollary Chrysostom's warning about the limitations of human reasoning compared with the divine design.[41] The wealth of

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a vessel (which is the homily) driven forward by the breath of the Spirit, with Christ himself—the Word—leading the way; Chrysostom himself as preacher has only to launch the boat and supply his tongue as sail to catch the breath of the Spirit. For a translation see R. Hill, "St. John Chrysostom's teaching on inspiration in 'Six Homilies on Isaiah' *VigC* 22 (1968) 30–31.

37. Homily 10. 38. Homily 15.

39. Homily 14;18;19;21. Indifference is also Lamech's flaw in 20.

40. "Binomials" is the name F. Asensio gives to these opposites that characterize Chrysostom's thinking, in his article, "El Crisóstomo y su visión de la escritura en la exposición homilética del Génesis," *EB* 32 (1973) 223–55, 329–56.

41. Homily 12;15;21.

Scripture, "beyond all telling" yet hidden beneath the surface, is a constant theme. In this series the Jews[42] and Judaizers[43] do not figure much, despite Baur's remarks about the threat their influential position posed to the faith in Antioch at that period.[44]

(14) Perhaps a word should be said about Chrysostom's sexism, if only for the heavy strain it places on the modern translator. We are not surprised to find him using only the masculine of his congregation in general or of the particular examples he takes. Today's congregations, however, would be less content to have a preacher talk about the wonderful people of sacred history and refer only to men, as Chrysostom invariably does;[45] in Homily 21 he even recommends them to name their children generally after those holy *andres*. Even when his LXX text reminds him that it is the human being, *anthrōpos*, that is in question—as in the case of its creation[46]—he thinks in terms of the male, so that for him (despite the text) *anthrōpos* and *gynē* become correlatives. His commentary on the Fall in Homily 17 further leads him to a somewhat unbalanced explanation of male superiority on the basis of greater female guilt. Doubtless he is not alone

42. Homily 8 and the following: Wilken, R. L. ed. *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*. (University of Notre Dame Press, 1975). ———. *John Chrysostom and the Jews*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). ——. *Judaism and the Early Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexander's Exegesis and Theology*. (Yale University Press, 1971). ——— and W. A. Meeks. *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era*. (Scholars Press, 1978).

43. Homily 12.

44. Baur I, 331–33. An interesting detail of Chrysostom's thought that strikes the reader when he reaches *Gn* 3.15 is that Chrysostom acknowledges no Messianic or Marian echoes in the text, whether through personal conviction or to discourage his congregation's looking for senses beyond the literal (Homily 17).

45. Cf. Homily 12;21. Recent works on Chrysostom's sexism include: Clark, Elizabeth A. *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends: essays and translations*. (New York: E. Mellen Press, 1979). Shore, Sally Ann. *De Virginitate* and *De non iterando coniugio: On Virginity* and *Against Remarriage* with an Introduction by Elizabeth A. Clark in Studies on Women and Religion, volume 9 (New York, 1983).

46. Cf. Homily 8;10.

amongst the Fathers with this usage and these attitudes, but they do prove a particular reminder of the distance between his time and our own.

CHRYSOSTOM AND SCRIPTURE

(15) More to the point in a study of Chrysostom as commentator on Sacred Scripture is the scriptural text on which he is commenting. We have seen that he has not the skills to go beyond the Greek version of the Old Testament; the name Septuagint for this translation has by Chrysostom's time come to cover a whole family of variant forms, and footnotes to the present translation document this diversity. It can therefore not be readily presumed that the *Gn* text read to Chrysostom's congregation and then commented on by him corresponds to any current English version, the text of our best contemporary Hebrew Bibles (like Kittel's) or Septuagint reconstructions (like Rahlfs'), or in the case of the New Testament to a text like that of Aland, Black *et al.* Baur explains that Origen's reconstruction of the LXX had been revised in Antioch by the priest Lucian, who had also worked on the NT text, and that it was probably Lucian's text that Chrysostom would have used. Baur adds, however, a further caveat: "The exact determination of the text was made more difficult because of the fact that Chrysostom, as well as other ecclesiastical writers of older and newer times, often quoted Scripture texts freely and diversely, from memory, and occasionally joined similar quotations, so that it is very difficult to say how his actual text read. For this reason there is lack of an absolutely reliable text of the works of Chrysostom himself."[47] My procedure has accordingly been to translate each text of Chrysostom individually, noting where significant the degree of departure from 'received texts'. I have also thought it best to keep to a spelling of proper names suggested by that text.

(16) The point has been made above that "exegetical" can

47. Baur I, 318.

be applied to this and other series of Chrysostom's homilies only 'secundum quid'. Whether through pastoral judgement or by force of his own limitations, the great preacher is satisfied with commenting on the text without submitting it to the rigorous processes of exegesis strictly so-called. We have seen above critics like G. Bardy and Beryl Smalley[48] taking him to task for his shortcomings—though they and other studies of Antiochene exegesis like those by A. Vaccari,[49] J. N. D. Kelly,[50] and W. Kaiser[51] tend to concentrate on the narrower area of hermeneutics. In that regard Chrysostom evidences the great respect for the literal sense characteristic of his school, as we shall see. As the complete exegete, however, he has many deficiencies of the kind we would probably expect of someone of his background and time. Occasionally he admits diversity in his text tradition.[52] He can also allow different interpretations of a difficult text, like *Gn* 4.8, and leave his listeners to make a choice.[53] But he shows little critical awareness in his treatment of *Genesis* material. Diversity of sources he knows nothing of: in Homily 12 he passes from one creation narrative to the next almost without reference to the duplication, just remarking that Moses had repeated his "first account" in the interests of that cardinal virtue, *akribeia*, precision. Likewise, as he begins to treat of the Priestly Sethite genealogy at 5.1, he simply remarks that the repetition is accounted for by the need of moral instruction for the listeners/readers.[54] He takes seriously the "difficulty" he presumes his listeners find in tracing the provenance of a wife for Cain if Scripture thus far has made no mention of girls.[55] "The names Adam imposed on

48. Cf. notes 21, 22 above. 49. Cf. note 4 above.

50. *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York, 1978[5]) 69–78.

51. Kaiser, W. *Towards an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1981) 57–58. See also Schäublin, Christoph. *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese* (Köln: P. Hanstein, 1974).

52. C. Hay, "Antiochene exegesis and Christology," *Australian Biblical Review* 12 (1964) 10–23, compares Chrysostom unfavorably with Theodore of Mopsuestia for his literary criticism.

53. Homily 19.

54. Homily 21. Just as Moses is responsible for all the *Gn* text, so "blessed David" is for all the Psalms.

55. Homily 20.

the animals remain up to the present time," he says smugly to his audience.[56] He can draw a simplistic conclusion from his text like that of male superiority referred to above in playing up woman's part in the Fall.[57] We are not surprised to find that he admits no distinction in character or origins between the parable of the Sower and its allegorical interpretation.[58] He is impatient with the LXX's linguistic nicety in preferring *Zoe* to *Eva* at 3.20 in Homily 18, and while quoting the former in his text he slips at once into the traditional name without explaining the distinction. None of these niceties, evidently, are relevant to his purpose; to quote Julian of Eclanum again, he proceeded "rather by exhortation than by exposition"—or, perhaps more accurately, his exposition was conducted only to the depth that would serve exhortation.

(17) This moral purpose of his in the commentary on *Gn* is certainly always to the fore, in addition even to the parenetic conclusion to every homily. Not only do critical exegetical details go without mention, but the dogmatic force of the text can yield to its moral content. For Chrysostom, the Fall is principally an instance, if the grossest, of that recurring *rhathumia*, "indifference, carelessness"; its reporting in the text is primarily didactic in his view. Despite the New Testament, Adam is of less significance than Eve and Cain—both exemplars, the one of that same *rhathumia*, the other of unprovoked malice. Likewise, whereas contemporary literary critics like Von Rad highlight the dogmatic significance of the Lamech incident, Chrysostom in Homily 20 makes much of Lamech as a moral figure (who, through a mistranslation by the LXX, becomes not an agent but an object of vengeance). The genealogy that opens Ch.5 of *Gn* is not for Chrysostom an index of a different narrative strand but clear proof that increasing sinfulness has led the author to switch his focus.[59] To the service of this moral purpose Chrysostom brings also considerable oratorical artistry: the malice and the plight of these key moral figures is brought out by lengthy series of rhetorical questions in

56. Homily 16.
57. Homily 17.
58. Homily 14.
59. Homily 21.

Homilies 19 and 20 that must have made for considerable dramatic effect—all for the moral betterment of the congregation, whether or not this was the primary burden of the text.

(18) The moral thrust in his exposition is evident also in his reference to other books of the Bible. Chrysostom has the Bible at his fingertips, and he expects his congregation to resonate to his wide-ranging scriptural references, which are not always explicit. There would hardly be a homily which does not move beyond the text of *Gn* to quote, especially in those parenetic conclusions and introductions, the words of Christ from Matthew's Gospel,[60] the psalms of "blessed David", and of course Chrysostom's soul-mate, Paul, "the world's teacher" and his own model.[61] Though ranging widely over the OT and NT canon of his time in the East, he finds this kind of material grist to his mill to a greater extent than historical details, such as the life of Jesus or the historical books of the OT; a glance at the scriptural quotations in this volume will show these books conspicuous by their absence, as also Mark's Gospel. Still, at other times Chrysostom can implicitly hold up the historical personages of the Bible to his congregation as models—again in the moral order.[62]

(19) Whatever of his skills and approach as exegete and commentator, Chrysostom is utterly scriptural in his preaching to his congregation. It was obviously a predictable choice for the preacher of Antioch to confine his attention solely to *Genesis* and those other parts of the Bible; he refers his listeners to no other literature, no other characters or events, contemporary or historical, than those in the sacred books, except for occasional tilting at notorious heretics whose views contradict the true sense of Scripture. Thankfully, these po-

60. Cf. Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1962) 337: "The book which St. Thomas Aquinas preferred to the whole town of Paris was St John Chrysostom on St. Matthew (translated by Burgundio of twelfth century)."

61. Cf. the intense admiration that glows in his commentary on Paul's tribulations in Homily 11. See also *De Laudibus Sancti Pauli* (*SC* 300) ed. and trans. by A. Piédagnel (Paris, 1982).

62. Homily 12;21.

lemical references are not so frequent as to obscure the realization that Chrysostom's esteem for Scripture was not born of the heat of controversy but was the fruit of personal meditation on the Incarnation, a dogma dear to his Antioch school.[63] Whether he be a relatively less brilliant luminary of that school, or less critical and no more original than his great Alexandrian predecessor, Origen, whose views he shared on such matters as the authorship and unity of the Scriptures, verbal inspiration and inerrancy,[64] it is appropriate that recent pontiffs and Vatican II have associated Chrysostom with the incarnational aspect of the Scriptures and the great regard Christians have for them as the incarnate Word of God.[65]

(20) In making this association, these magisterial texts highlight Chrysostom's distinctive notion about the Scriptures, *synkatabasis*—while their English versions follow the regrettable habit of mistranslating this key term as "condescension." In Chrysostom, however, there is nothing of the patronizing suggested by that word; instead, he has in mind God's gracious acceptance of the limitations (*astheneia*—another key term, also commonly mistranslated as "weakness") of the human condition—eminently in the Incarnation, and derivatively in that other incarnation of the Word in Scripture.[66] As F. H. Chase said a century ago: "The great principle expressed by the word *synkatabasis* is of deep and wide application. As in the historical Incarnation the Eternal Word became flesh, so in the Bible the glory of God veils itself in the fleshly garments of human thought and human language."[67] For Chrysostom the Scriptures exemplify God's gracious "considerateness" (*not*

63. For a complete treatment of Chrysostom's teaching on Scripture, see R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies*.

64. For Origen's teaching on Scripture, see R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event. A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture* (London, 1959).

65. Cf. *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, *AAS* 35 (1943) 316; *Dei Verbum* 13; and R. Hill, "St. John Chrysostom and the Incarnation of the Word in Scripture," *Compass Theology Review* 14 (1980) 34–38.

66. See R. Hill, "On looking again at sunkatabasis," *Prudentia* 13 (1981) 3–11.

67. F. H. Chase, *Chrysostom. A Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*, (Cambridge, 1887) 42.

"condescension") because in them God speaks to human beings in language, and primarily in speech. So many times in the *Gn* homilies are we reminded that it is Moses speaking—"or, rather, the Holy Spirit speaking by his tongue," or some such phrase demonstrating his conviction of inspired authorship.[68] Hence his great respect for his own role as commentator on the text, an inspired activity as is that of his listeners, and respect for the text in all its minute details: how often do we hear him urging his congregation "not to pass heedlessly by" any small detail, and how often does he heed his own advice by wrestling with some little particle (like the "but" in *Gn* 2.20).[69] "Sacred Scripture says nothing idly or by chance; every single sound and syllable has a treasure contained in it," he repeatedly urges them.[70]

(21) Hence, of course, his and the Antiochene school's insistence on the literal sense of Scripture and their unwillingness to part company with it too readily in the direction of allegorical interpretation. Belief in the extent of inspiration leads Chrysostom to prize the *akribeia*, "precision", of Scripture (again an oft-mistranslated term, rendered inadequately as "accuracy"—an ironic fate for this champion of precision), prompting in the exegete by way of response to God's considerateness a like precision in exegesis.[71] More than a score of times in the *Gn* homilies he exclaims in admiration, "Let us admire the precision of Sacred Scripture," or some such phrase. The corollary of this stance is his evident reluctance to admit any other sense than the literal; occasionally in commenting on the *Psalms* he feels encouraged to recognize a spiritual sense, very rarely an allegorical sense and then only with the support of the New Testament.[72] He is content that

68. For details, see R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* 84ff. and R. Hill, "Chrysostom's terminology for the inspired Word," *EB* 41 (1983) 367–373.

69. Homily 15. 70. Homily 18.

71. Cf. R. Hill, "Akribeia: a principle of Chrysostom's exegesis," *Colloquium* 14 (Oct. 1981) 32–36.

72. R. Hill, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* 144–49.

Scripture, because inspired, teaches the truth, and that the purpose of this truth is the welfare of the reader/listener—it is a saving truth; but he is a disappointment to those moderns whose inadequate notions of inspiration lead them to see inerrancy as its principal effect and cause them to focus on this to the exclusion of the saving effect of the Word[73]—a distortion that Chrysostom, who keeps his roots in the Incarnation, could not be guilty of. "Let us learn, if you would, the force of what has been read today from the words of blessed Moses. Attend carefully, I ask you, to what is said by us; they are not our words we are speaking, but what the love of God provides for the sake of our salvation."[74] What more can be said of the Scriptures, their nature, their origin and purpose? If his oratory has been judged golden, Chrysostom's theology of the Word is surely profound—something the *Genesis* homilies eminently demonstrate.

73. Chrysostom has suffered in this way at the hands of students less enlightened than himself, like Haidacher (see Quasten III 466–67).

74. Homily 2.

HOMILY 1

Homily on the beginning of the holy season of Lent

AM PLEASED (21a) and delighted to see the church of God adorned today with the throng of her own children, and to see you all coming together with great joy. I mean, whenever I look upon your beaming faces, I take it as an infallible sign of the satisfaction you feel at heart. —As the wise man said, "The face betrays the joy of the heart."[1] So naturally I myself arose this morning with more than the usual enthusiasm since I was to share with you this spiritual happiness and I wanted to become a herald for you of the approach of Lent—the medicine, I might say, for your souls. (21b) Like a loving father, you see, the Lord of us all, in his desire that we be cleansed of the sins we have committed with the passing of time, desired a remedy for us through holy fasting.

(2) So let no one be gloomy, no one look sullen, but exult and be glad, and glorify the guardian of our souls, who shows us the best way, and welcome with great joy his approach. Let the pagans be ashamed and the Jews dismayed to see the love revealed by our welcoming the approach of this season with such excitement, (21c) and let them learn through the experience of these things the extent of the difference between them and us. Let them designate as their feasts and festivals drunkenness and all other kinds of licencious and shameful behavior, which it is typical of them to wallow in, but let the Church of God, unlike them, identify feasts with fasting, ne-

1. Prv 15.13. Chrysostom's Old Testament text, as Introduction 15 explains, is a variant of the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation(s) of the original.

glect of the appetite and all the virtues that accompany it. This, in fact, is a true feast, where there is saving of souls, where there is peace and harmony, where the harsh realities of daily life are missing, (21d) without tumult and din and the antics of good cooks and slaughter of brute beasts. Utter rest and quiet, love and joy, peace and gentleness, and a thousand other good things are the order of the day in place of that other behavior.

(3) So come now, I beg you, let us discuss these things, my dear people;[2] let me urge you first of all to receive our words with great enthusiasm so as to gain something worthwhile and so return home. It is not, after all, idly and to no purpose that we have come here, for one person to do the talking and the other simply to applaud what is said, and so for us to go off home. Instead, it is for me to utter something useful and relevant to (22a) your salvation, and for you to profit from what is said and so to leave here for home after gaining much benefit. The church, you see, is a pharmacy of the spirit, and those who come here ought acquire some appropriate remedies, apply them to their own complaints, and go off the better for it. I mean, blessed Paul confirms this, that mere listening without showing practical response is of no value, when he says: "It is not, after all, the listeners to the law who are at rights with God, but doers of the law who are set at rights."[3] Christ, too, in his preaching said: "Not everyone saying to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father in heaven."[4] (22b) Accordingly, dearly beloved, since we know that no benefit comes to us from listening unless it is brought to its completion in the good works that follow, let us not be listeners only but doers, so that

2. Chrysostom refers to his congregation here as "your *agāpē*", a word that moves in Christian tradition from its meaning of "love" to the love feast of the Eucharist and then the Eucharistic assembly. Chrysostom's usage is at some point along the line of this development, even though his Lenten gatherings seem not to be for the Eucharist.

3. Rom. 2.13. Chrysostom's New Testament text is probably a locally revised text, differing at times (like his OT) from modern reconstructed texts. (Cf. Introduction 15)

4. Mt 7.21.

the works following the words may be for us grounds for confidence.

(4) Accordingly, open up the recesses of your mind so as to receive the sermon on fasting. To make a comparison with a modest and demure bride: those with the task of introducing her to the bridal chamber adorn it with drapes and cleanse the whole house, giving no entrance to untidy servant girls, and only then do they conduct the bride to her chamber. (22c) I would like you to follow this model, purifying your thinking and bidding adieu to indulgence and intemperance; then, with the recesses of your mind open to receive them, welcome the mother of every good, mistress of sobriety and every other virtue—I mean fasting—so that you may enjoy greater pleasure and she may provide you with her own special healing. To put it another way: when doctors intend to prescribe medicine to patients anxious to get rid of putrid, harmful fluids, they direct them to abstain from bodily food (22d) lest it be a hindrance to the power of the medicine instead of its having the effect of demonstrating its true properties. So much the more should we, on the point of receiving that spiritual medicine—the benefit of fasting—purify our thinking and render our mind alert lest it be sodden with drink and find useless and unprofitable what should be of benefit in the exercise.

(5) I know, of course, that what I say today will strike many of you as novel. I beg you, however, not to let ourselves (23a) heedlessly become the slaves of habit, but let us subject these matters affecting ourselves to the process of reason. After all, do you get any benefit from daily gluttony and extreme indulgence? Far from benefit, all you get is harm and intolerable damage. You see, whenever reason becomes sodden through drinking to excess, immediately the benefit gained from fasting is wiped out without trace. I ask you: what could be more distasteful, what more unseemly than people quaffing wine right up till midnight, up to the dawning of the first rays of the rising sun, reeking to high heaven from drinking all that wine, a disagreeable spectacle to people they meet, an object of contempt to their household, the laughing stock of all who have some little idea of correct behavior and in the eyes

of everyone (23b) when they draw on themselves the displeasure of God through this extreme intemperance and ill-timed, mindless indulgence. "Drunkards," Scripture says, "will not inherit the kingdom of God."[5] So what could be worse than the plight of these people who are driven from the precincts of the kingdom for a fleeting and pernicious satisfaction?

(6) God forbid that anyone of you gathered here should be overcome by that weakness. May you instead celebrate each day as it comes with restraint and sobriety, and be free of the storms and tempests that indulgence is accustomed to cause, and thus reach the harbor of your souls—I mean fasting—so as to be in a position to gain its advantages in abundance. I mean, just as indulgence proves to be cause and promoter of countless evils for the human race, in like manner fasting and neglect of appetite have invariably proved the cause of innumerable benefits to us. (23c) God, you remember, in forming human beings in the beginning, knew that they had particular need of this remedy for the salvation of their souls, and so from the outset he gave the first human creature this command: "'From all the trees in the garden you are to eat your fill, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat.'"[6] That text about eating and not eating refers figuratively to fasting. Although man was obliged to keep that command, he did not do so: overcome by intemperance and guilty of disobedience, he incurred a sentence of death. When the devil, as you remember, evil spirit and enemy of our nature as he is, saw the first human being living in the garden, how his life was carefree and how he lived on earth in bodily form yet like an angel, (23d) he wanted to trip him up and dislodge him with the hope of greater promises, and so he cheated him of the possession of what he had. This is the extent of the evil of not keeping within proper limits but aspiring to greater heights. A wise man has made this clear in the words, "Through the devil's envy death entered the world."[7] Do you see, dearly beloved, how from the beginning it was

5. 1 Cor 6.10.
6. Gn 2.16–17.
7. Wis 2.24.

from intemperance that death had its entry? Notice likewise that later, too, Sacred Scripture repeatedly accuses indulgence, in one place saying, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to entertain themselves,"[8] in another, "He ate and drank, grew fat and heavy, and for his love returned him scorn."[9] The inhabitants of Sodom, too, brought that implacable anger upon themselves from this sin, not to mention their other faults; (24a) listen again to the words of the prophet, "This was the sin of the Sodomites, indulgence amid plenty."[10] In short, it crops up repeatedly like some fount or source of every evil.

(7) Do you now recognize the harm caused by intemperance? Look in turn at the instances of good behavior due to fasting. The great Moses, after keeping his fast for forty days,[11] was able to get the tables of the Law; and when he came down from the mountain and saw the people's sin, the tablets which he had been successful in obtaining through such intercession he threw down and smashed,[12] thinking it was preposterous that an indulgent and sinful people should receive laws of the Lord's own making. Accordingly, that remarkable prophet had again to undergo forty days of fasting so as to be able to receive again tables like the ones he had broken through the people's sin, and bring them down the mountain.[13] (24b) The great Elijah, too, underwent a similar period of fasting,[14] escaping the power of death and going up as it were into heaven with a fiery chariot, and to this day he has not experienced death. Likewise Daniel, passionate man though he was,[15] spent many days fasting and received as recompense an awesome vision so that he tamed the fury of the lions and turned them into the mildest of sheep, not by

8. Ex 32.6.

9. Dt 32.15, where Heb. and LXX and Chrysostom's own variant of it all diverge.

10. A précis of Ez 16.49.

11. Cf. Ex 24.18; 21.18.

12. Ex 32.19.

13. Ex 34.28.

14. Cf. 1 Kgs 19.8.

15. Chrysostom proceeds to construct his own midrash of chs 6 and 10 of *Daniel* to labor the point of fasting. The phrase he invariably applies to Daniel, "man of passion", comes from Theodotion's version of the book.

changing their nature but by diverting their purpose without loss of their ferocity. The Ninevites made use of this remedy, too, and won from the Lord a reprieve, ensuring that animals as well as human beings should apply the remedy and so abstain each of them from evil practices; thus they won the favor of the Lord of all.[16] (24c) We could list many other examples celebrated in both Old and New Testaments—but why refer to servants when we should come to the case of the common Lord of us all? Our Lord Jesus Christ, you know, himself underwent fasting for forty days,[17] and, thus prepared, he entered his contest with the devil, giving us an example that through fasting we should arm ourselves and by acquiring strength from that exercise we should come to grips with that formidable enemy.

(8) At this point, however, someone who looks critically at things and keeps his faculties alert may perhaps pose the question: why is the Lord seen to fast for the same number of days as his subjects, and why did he not surpass that number? It was not idly or to no purpose that this happened, but according to the Lord's own wise purposes and his loving kindness. (24d) I mean, in case it would appear that he had simply come on earth without taking flesh and becoming a human being except in appearance, he fasted for the very same number of days to make this point, not adding any days, so as to curb the rivalry of people wanting to act unrestrainedly.[18] You see, if there are still those rash enough to speak this way even when the Lord acted as he did, what would they not have attempted to say if he had not in his providence robbed them of any pretext? So he resisted the temptation to fast for a longer period of days than his subjects; thus he taught us a lesson, that he has taken the human condition on himself and is not living apart from our human situation.

(9) Since it is now clear to you from the example both of the Lord and his subjects that the value of fasting is considerable,

16. Cf. Jonah 3. 17. Mt 4.2; Lk 4.2.

18. Chrysostom is a great exponent of the school of Antioch in its insistence on the Incarnation and the humanity of Jesus.

and that great benefit accrues to the soul from it, I beg you, my dear people, now that you know its (25a) benefit not to resist its saving power through indifference[19] nor lose heart at its approach, but rejoice and be glad, as blessed Paul says, "The more our external selves are destroyed, the more the inner person is renewed."[20] Fasting is nourishment for the soul, you see, and just as bodily nourishment fattens the body, so fasting invigorates the soul, provides it with nimble wings, lifts it on high, enables it to contemplate things that are above, and renders it superior to the pleasures and attractions of this present life. And just as the lightest ships cross the seas more rapidly whereas those weighed down with much cargo take on water, in like manner fasting leaves the faculty of reason nimble and enables it to negotiate the problems of life adroitly and fly to heaven and the things of heaven, (25b) despising the things of this life as being no less evanescent than shadows and dreams. Indulgence and intemperance, on the other hand, weigh down our reason, fatten the body, and shackle the spirit, hemming it in on all sides; they deprive the judgement of reason of any dependability, inducing it to follow dangerous courses, and thus work in every way against our salvation.

(10) Let us not be careless, dearly beloved, in dealing with matters concerning our salvation; recognizing instead the troubles that could come from that evil source, let us avoid the harm it produces. After all, we are warned against intemperance not only in the New dispensation by its greater attention to right thinking, its more frequent struggles and greater effort, its many rewards and ineffable consolations. Not even people living under the Old Law were permitted to indulge themselves in that way, (25c) even though they were sitting in the dark, dependent upon tapers, and brought forward gradually into the light, like children being weaned off milk. Lest

19. Indifference, negligence, sloth is for Chrysostom, who is above all a moral commentator, the capital sin, just as enthusiasm, zeal is the cardinal virtue. These virtues and vices will predominate in his commentary of *Genesis*, determining relative emphasis given to incidents and characters. This says much of Chrysostom himself, whatever of its effect on his commentary.

20. 2 Cor 4.16.

you think I am idly finding fault with intemperance in what I say, listen to what the prophet says: "Woe to those who fall on evil days in sleeping on beds of ivory, luxuriating on their couches, living on a diet of goats picked from the flocks and suckling calves from the herds, and drinking strained wines, anointed with precious unguents—like men treating this as a lasting city, and not seeking one to come."[21] Do you see the heavy accusation the prophet levels against intemperance in charging the Jews with these faults of stupidity, sensuality and daily gluttony? I mean, note the accuracy of the words: (25d) after attacking their gluttony and their drinking to excess, he added, "like men treating this as a lasting city, and not seeking one to come," all but stating that their satisfaction got as far as lips and palate, and they went on to nothing better. Pleasure, however, is brief and fleeting, whereas pain never lets up and has no end. The truth of this comes from experience, the true meaning of lasting realities—"like men treating this as a lasting city"—and fleeting things—"not seeking one to come"—that is, not lasting for a moment.

(11) All human and carnal things, after all, are of this kind like pleasures, human glory and power, like wealth and all the prosperity of this present life; these things have nothing firm about them, nothing steady, nothing fixed, but shift more rapidly than the currents of a river, leaving naked and desolate (26a) those swept along in them. Spiritual things, on the other hand, are not like that—quite the opposite, in fact: firm and immovable, not subject to change, lasting forever. What folly, then, would it be to exchange the immovable for the tottering, the permanent for the passing, the enduring for the fleeting, what promises to give joy in eternity for what offers us terrible punishment there?

(12) Considering all this, therefore, dearly beloved, and placing great store on our salvation, let us despise intemperance as mindless and harmful, let us embrace fasting, and right attitudes along with it; let us display a renewed life-style, and address ourselves daily to performance of good deeds. In

21. Am 6.3–6, somewhat re-arranged in Chrysostom's variant text.

this way, having spent all the holy season of Lent (26b) dealing in spiritual goods and amassing great wealth of virtue, we would thus merit to arrive at the Day of the Lord and approach with confidence that awesome spiritual banquet, and with conscience pure share in those ineffable and immortal goods, being filled therefrom with grace and with the prayers and intercessions of those well-pleasing to Christ our loving God, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 2

On the beginning of creation: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth."[1]

TODAY, LOOKING AT your dear faces, I am filled with great happiness. (26c) My happiness is not simply that of doting parents who are pleased to have their children milling around them and bringing them pleasure by some other nice behavior or attention to them. My joy and satisfaction now is keener than that, to see the way you have come together here in a spiritual assembly with such propriety, ardent in your desire to hear the divine sayings, spurning nourishment and longing for spiritual feasting, thus demonstrating in deed that word of the Lord which reads: (26d) "Human beings will not live on bread alone, but on every word coming from the mouth of God."[2]

(2) So come now, let us imitate the farmers: when they see the land scarified and cleared of the obstruction of weeds, they sow the seed liberally. It should be the same with ourselves. When by the grace of God the soil which is our spiritual self is cleared of troublesome passions and is relieved of intemperance, there are no storms or tempests at any stage of its reasoning, but only peace and the great tranquillities of a mind ready to fly aloft, you might say, right up to heaven, and contemplate spiritual things in preference to carnal. (27a) So

1. Gn 1.1. Chrysostom, of course, as Introduction 3 & 15 mentions, is commenting on his LXX text, and is unaware of the recommendation of some modern commentators on the Heb. text to take v.1 as a subordinate clause, v.2 as parenthetical, and only v.3 as the principal assertion, lest God's creative activity be seen to result at once in chaos (cf. Speiser, *Genesis*, 12–13). Others, like Von Rad, join Chrysostom in maintaining the independence of v.1 as an important theological statement.

2. Mt 4.4; cf. Dt 8.3.

I would like to address a few points, dearly beloved, to you, and today take up some of the finer details after proposing to you the teachings of Sacred Scripture. I mean, if we don't attempt this, now that fasting and neglect of appetite are in force, and there is the serenity that arises from calm reasoning, when will we be able to propose it to you in your goodness? When you are beset by intemperance and gluttony and utter idleness? Hardly. In that case we ourselves would be powerless to do anything worthwhile, and you would be unable to accept anything said to you, being swept along by an unruly flood of thought as though by some billowing fog.

(3) So now is the right time, if ever there was one, for teachings of the kind I have in mind, when the maid no longer resists her mistress, but is docile, responsive and obedient, restraining the impulses of nature (27b) and keeping within proper limits. Fasting, after all, is our peace of soul, the charm of old people, the instructor of the young, the model of the prudent, adorning every age and disposition like a diadem. Let there be no sign today of uproar or outcry, no chopping of carcasses or antics of cooks; out with all this, and let our city present the appearance of some proper lady, nice and charming. You see, when I take account of the transformation that has occurred overnight from the perturbation I remember from yesterday, I'm amazed and staggered at the efficacy of fasting, how it can take over and alter everyone's attitude, purifying the minds not only of rulers but of ruled, not only freemen but slaves, not only men (27c) but women, not only rich but poor, not only those familiar with the Greek language but also those who do not speak Greek. But why talk of rulers and ruled? The wearer of the crown along with everyone else has his attitude brought under obedience by fasting. Today there is no difference to be seen between the rich man's table and the poor man's; instead, there is simple living in everyone's case, free of any luxury or show, with people coming with greater relish to the simplicity of the meal today than when they were provided with sumptuous fare and wine unstinted.

(4) Do you see, dearly beloved, from these introductory

words the efficacy of fasting? Accordingly, I address myself to you with greater enthusiasm today than before, (27d) in the knowledge that I am casting seed upon rich and fertile soil, capable of yielding to us in rapid time an abundant return of what was sown. So let us learn, if you would, the force of what has been read to you today from the words of blessed Moses. Attend carefully, I ask you, to what is said by us; they are not our words that we are uttering, after all, but what the love of God provides for the sake of your salvation. What are they? "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." It is in order to pose the question here: why did this blessed author, born many generations later, put this to us? Not idly or without good reason. You see, when God formed human beings in the beginning, he used to speak to them personally, in a way that was possible for human beings to understand him.[3] This was the way, for example, that he came to Adam, the way he (28a) upbraided Cain, the way he conversed with Noah, the way he accepted Abraham's hospitality. And even when all humankind fell into evil ways, the creator of all did not abandon the human race. Instead, when they then proved unworthy of his converse with them, he wanted to renew his love for them; he sent them letters as you do to people far away from you, and this drew all humankind back again to him. It was God who sent them letters, Moses who delivered them. What do the letters say? "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."

(5) Notice this remarkable author, dearly beloved, and the particular gift he had. I mean, while all the other inspired authors told either what would happen after a long time or what was going to take place immediately, this blessed author, being born many generations after the event, (28b) was guided by the deity on high and judged worthy to narrate what had been created by the Lord of all from the very beginning. Accordingly, he began with these words: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." He well nigh bellows at

3. This is the beautiful theology of the Scriptural Word characteristic of Chrysostom. Cf. Introduction 19–21, *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* and other works of mine on the subject cited in the Bibliography.

us all and says, "Is it by human beings I am taught in uttering these things? It is the one who brought being from nothing who stirred my tongue in narrating them." Since we therefore listen to these words not as the words of Moses but as the words of the God of all things coming to us through the tongue of Moses, so, I beg you, let us heed what is said and part company with our own reasoning. Scripture, after all, says: "The thoughts of mortals are deceptive, and their thinking unreliable."[4] (28c) Let us accept what is said with much gratitude, not overstepping the proper limit nor busying ourselves with matters beyond us; this is the besetting weakness of enemies of the truth, wishing as they do to assign every matter to their own reasoning, and lacking the realization that it is beyond the capacity of human nature to plumb God's creation.

(6) But why mention God's creation? Even human arts germane to them are beyond them. Tell me, for instance, how the substance of gold takes shape through the art of mining? or how the purity of glass comes from sand? You can't tell. So if it's impossible to fathom what lies before your very eyes and the things which human wisdom devises, thanks to God's loving kindness, (28d) why busy yourself, mere mortal, about the things created by God? What sort of excuse would you manage to adduce? and what defense would you invent for contemplating what lies beyond your natural powers? I mean, to say that existing things came to be from underlying matter, and not to admit that the Creator of all produced them from non-existence, would be a mark of utter stupidity. Accordingly, this blessed author, when he was on the point of beginning the book, stopped the mouths of such idiots, by beginning like this: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." When you hear "He made," concern yourself no further, but with head bowed believe what is said. For God it is who makes and transforms all things, and refashions all things according to his will.

(7) See (29a) the great extent of the consideratenes[5] in this statement; there is no mention of unseen powers, nor does it

4. Wis 9.14.

5. Chrysostom's notion of the "consideratenes" of God evidenced in the

say, In the beginning God made the angels, or the archangels. It was not idly or without purpose[6] that he took this line in his teaching. I mean, since he was talking to Jews, people quite wrapped up in the world about them and incapable of forming any spiritual notion, he led them along for the time being from visible realities to the creator of all things, so that from created things they might come to learn the architect of all and adore their maker, not stopping short at creatures. You see, despite the creation of the world they had not avoided the error of making gods out of creatures, offering worship to the vilest of brutes; so what madness would they not have fallen into if such considerateness had not been shown them?

(8) Don't be surprised, dearly beloved, if Moses followed this procedure (29b) speaking as he was at the beginning in the early stages to very down-to-earth Jews, when even Paul in the age of grace, when proclamation of the good news had advanced so much, was able, in the speech he was on the point of delivering to the Athenians, to base his teaching to them on visible realities, in these words: "God made the world and everything in it; being Lord and maker of heaven and earth, he does not dwell in man-made temples, nor can human hands pay him due worship."[7] I mean, he could see that kind of approach suited them, so he followed that line; that is to say, he was guided by the Spirit to direct his teaching to the ones who would receive what he had to give them. To learn that his basis for deciding this was the difference in his audience and the materialism of his listeners, listen to his words. In addressing his letter to the people of Colossae (29c) he did not keep to that approach, but addressed them differently, in these words: "In him were created all things—those in the heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether

Scriptures is his most characteristic contribution to patristic thinking on the Word. See Introduction 20.

6. This, too, is a characteristic phrase of Chrysostom's stressing the "precision" of Scripture and arising out of that "considerateness"; it occurs 39 times in the *Genesis* homilies. See R. Hill, "*Akribeia*: a principle of Chrysostom's exegesis," *Colloquium* 14 (Oct. 1981) 32–36.

7. Acts 17.24–25.

thrones, dominations, principalities, powers—all were created by him and with him in mind."[8] John, the Son of Thunder, by contrast shouted aloud, "Everything was made through him, and without him no single thing was made."[9]

(9) Moses, however, did not speak like that, as you'd expect; after all, it wasn't logical that those still requiring to be fed on milk be given solid food instead. To take another example: whereas teachers who have been entrusted by parents with the education of their children give them the fundamentals of learning, those who receive the children from them at the next stage take them through more developed stages of learning. (29d) This same pattern was followed by blessed Moses, by the teacher of the Gentiles, and the son of thunder. When Moses, remember, in the beginning took on the instruction of the human race, he taught his listeners the elements, whereas Paul and John, taking over from Moses, could at that later stage transmit more developed notions.

(10) Hence we discover the reason for the consideration shown to date, namely, that under the guidance of the Spirit he was speaking in a manner appropriate to his hearers as he outlined everything. At the same time he uprooted all the heresies springing up like weeds in the Church by his words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." Even if Mani accosts you saying matter preexisted, or Marcion, or Valentinus, or pagans,[10] tell them directly: (30a) "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." But what if the person does not believe in the Scriptures? Leave him to his own devices, like an utter madman; for what allowance can you make for a person who does not believe the creator of all things, who treats the truth as falsehood? People of that ilk sport false colors: while wearing the appearance of sweet reasonableness, they are in fact wolves in sheep's clothing. Don't you be taken in; on the

8. Col 1.16.

9. Jn 1.3.

10. Chrysostom is very much aware of the pluralism of theological opinion of his day, and frequently takes issue with heterodox views, earning from his great historian, Dom Baur, the label "Die Polemiker." Fortunately, the *Genesis* homilies arise more from theological meditation and pastoral concern, and are not overly punctuated with polemical asides.

contrary, spurn this behavior all the more for the reason that, while they pretend an obsequiousness towards you though simply your peer, towards God the Lord of all they wage open warfare and do not perceive that they are running from salvation. Let us, on the other hand, cling to the unshakeable rock and keep coming back to the beginning, (30b) "In the beginning God made heaven and earth."

(11) Notice how the divine nature shines out of the very manner of creation, how he executes his creation in a way contrary to human procedures, first stretching out the heavens and then laying out the earth beneath, first the roof and then the foundation. Who has ever seen the like? Who has ever heard of it? No matter what human beings produce, this could never have happened—whereas when God decides, everything yields to his will and becomes possible. So don't pry too closely with human reasoning into the works of God; instead, let the works lead you to marvel at their maker. Scripture says, remember, "What the eye cannot see in him has come into view from the creation of the world and are understood through the things he has made."[11] (30c) If the enemies of truth insist on saying it is impossible for something to be produced from nothing, let us ask them. The first human being—was he made from the earth, or did he come from somewhere else? To a man they'll say from the earth, and make no bones about it. So let them tell us how the substance of flesh came into existence from the earth. I mean, from the earth you get clay, and bricks, and pottery, and potsherds so how would you get the substance of flesh? how would you get bones and nerves and arteries, fat and skin, nails and hair, and all the qualities of different substances from one underlying material? They wouldn't be able to open their mouth in reply. Yet why do I confine my remarks to the body? Let them tell us about the bread we eat daily, how it is changed into blood, gall, bile, and various humors while being one in composition. (30d) Bread often has the color of grain, whereas blood is red or black. So, if they can't tell about these things

11. Rom 1.20.

that are before our eyes day in and day out, they would hardly tell us about all the other things created by God. If, however, despite such an embarrassment of proofs they want to insist on reinforcing their own obstinacy, let us likewise keep throwing back in their teeth the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth." This single sentence, after all, is enough to overthrow all the defenses of our adversaries, and to tear up all their human reasonings, roots and all; and should they ever want eventually to abjure their polemics, it would be possible through this verse for them to be led to the path of truth.

(12) The text proceeds: (31a) "The earth was invisible and lacking all shape."[12] For what reason, tell me, did he create the sky bright and finished, but let the earth appear formless? This too was not done without purpose; his intention was that you would learn about his craftsmanship from the better part of creation, and so have no further doubts or think that it all happened out of a lack of power. For a quite different purpose he produced the earth in a formless condition. The earth, you know, is our mother and provider; to it we owe our beginning and our growth; this is homeland and grave for us all alike; to the earth we come back in the end, and through it we lay hold of countless benefits. So in case human beings might through the pressure of necessity treat the earth with a respect beyond its due, he shows it to you first formless and imperfect (31b) so that you would not attribute the earth's gifts to it but to the one who brought it into existence from nothing. For this reason the text reads: "The earth was invisible and lacking all shape."

(13) Perhaps our first reaction is to submit our minds immediately to a whole range of intricate questions. So it's better to conclude our sermon at this point, exhorting you in your goodness to remember what has been said and keep it ever in

12. Gn 1.2. Modern translations render this verse, "The earth was a formless waste," or some such. Chrysostom's LXX text, however, seems to turn the strange Heb. phrase into "invisible," *aoratos*—as if someone has read that word mistakenly for *aoristos*, "formless." Chrysostom has no difficulty justifying his text, however, as we shall see in Homily 4.

your mind; when you go home from here, lay out with your meal a spiritual meal as well. The father of the family might repeat something of what was said here; his wife could then hear it, the children too could learn something, even the domestics might be instructed. In short, the household might become a church,[13] so that the devil is driven off and that evil spirit, (31c) the enemy of our salvation, takes to flight; the grace of the Holy Spirit would rest there instead, and all peace and harmony surround the inhabitants. After all, if you keep in mind what has been said previously and more eagerly accept what is said later, we for our part will speak with greater zeal and eloquence what God's grace has given us when we see the harvest already following the sowing. When the farmer sees the seeds sprouting, he tills the fields with greater eagerness and hastens willingly to make further sowings.

(14) So, to make us more enthusiastic, take good heed of what has been said already, and with right teachings give great attention to caring for your life. (31d) Scripture says, "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and glorify your father in heaven,"[14] in order that your life may conform with your teachings, and your teachings reveal your life. After all, "faith without works is dead,"[15] and works without faith are dead. For even if we have sound teachings but fail in living, the teachings benefit us nothing; likewise, if we take pains with life but are careless about teaching, that will not be any good to us either. So it is necessary to shore up this spiritual edifice of ours in both directions as Scripture says, "Everyone listening to my words and acting on them will be likened to a wise man."[16] Notice how this person intends not merely to listen but to act, and to demonstrate his listening by his actions; this is the one called

13. When Vatican Council II (LG 11) quotes this notion of the domestic Church from Christian tradition, it might have acknowledged Chrysostom at this and other places. [Ed. Note: But cf. *Constitutionis Dogmaticae Lumen Gentium Synopsis Historica*, a cura di Giuseppe Alberigo, Franca Magistretti, Bologna, 1975, 32/305, which cites *In Gen.* h. 2,4, PG 53.31, and *In Gen.* s. 6,2, PG 54.607.]

14. Mt 5.16. 15. Jas 2.26.

16. Mt 7.24.

wise, the one (32a) giving evidence of deeds in the wake of words, whereas the one who stopped short at words was called a fool. And rightly so; after all, such a person built his house on sand, and so it could not withstand the onset of winds but quickly collapsed.[17] You see, such people are lazy, not standing firm on the spiritual rock; the point of this parable is not a house or building, but people, those being buffeted by the onslaughts of some temptation. Under the name of wind, rain and waters, the text is suggesting to us the onset of temptations. Of course, people who are firm and watchful and restrained are made even stronger by these assaults: the more they are afflicted by adversity, the more their virtue is increased. But with the lazy and fainthearted, if only a gentle breeze of temptation touches them, immediately they shake and collapse, (32b) not from the strength of the temptations but from their own weakness of will.

(15) So let us be sober and watchful, and prepared for everything, so that we may be well disciplined in prosperity and restrained under the onset of adversity, showing great prudence and constantly rendering thanks to the loving God. If we manage our lives this way, we shall enjoy much favor from on high and thus be able to pass our life on earth securely and have much confidence regarding the life to come. May we all reach it, through the love and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, sovereignty and praise, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

17. Cf. Mt 7.26–27.

HOMILY 3

Further comment on the verse, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth,"[1] up to the verse, "Evening came and morning came: one day."[2]

EADING (32C) THE HOLY Scriptures is like a treasure.[3] With a treasure, you see, anyone able to find a tiny nugget gains for himself great wealth; likewise in the case of Sacred Scripture, you can get from a small phrase a great wealth of thought and immense riches. The Word of God is not only like a treasure, but is also like a spring gushing with everflowing waters in a mighty flood; this we all perceived from what we did yesterday. We began, remember, at the opening of the book of *Genesis* on the words, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," and dealt completely with all its contents, without however being able to grasp it fully. You see, great is the yield of this treasure and the flow of this spiritual fountain. Don't be surprised if we have experienced this: (32d) our forebears drank from these waters to the limit of their capacity, and those who come after us will try to do likewise, without risk of exhausting them; instead the flood will increase and the streams will be multiplied.

1. Gn 1.1.

2. Gn 1.5. Speiser notes: "In Semitic the normal ordinal series is '*one*, second, third,' etc., not '*first*, second, third,' etc." (*Genesis*, 6)—something lost on the LXX, evidently, and on Chrysostom.

3. Chrysostom employs a wide range of figures for the saving truth that is Sacred Scripture: a rich table or feast (his favorite), a treasure (especially gold and gems to be mined), food and drink, remedies for ailments, arms for warfare, an overflowing stream—figures that H. De Lubac parallels from the Latin Fathers, so evidently the stock-in-trade of churchmen of the time (cf. *Exégèse Médiévale* I (Paris 1959), 119–20, and *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* 160–69.

(2) Such, after all, is the nature of spiritual streams the more earnestly anyone tries to draw the water, the more they abound and the spiritual grace is increased. Hence Christ said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. If anyone believes in me, as Scripture says, rivers of living water will flow from his belly"[4] indicating to us the abundance of the waters. So since this is the nature of spiritual waters, come, let us all constantly bring the vessels of our minds to be filled, and thus return home. For whenever the Spirit (33a) sees an ardent desire and a watchful mind, he freely grants it abundant grace. So step aside from your daily preoccupations and from things that threaten to suffocate your thinking like weeds, and let us give free rein to spiritual desires so that we may gain great advantage from this consideration and receive much benefit; then we can go home.

(3) But in order that the sermon may be clearer to you, let us remind you in your goodness[5] of some details of what was said yesterday so as to fit together, as into one whole, what is to be said today with what was said yesterday. We showed you yesterday, as you will recall, how blessed Moses explained to us the creation of these visible elements in saying (33b) that "in the beginning God made heaven and earth; the land was invisible and lacking all shape." And we taught you why he left the land unshaped and unpeopled, and I think you remember it all precisely, so today we must proceed to what follows in the text. You see, when he says, "The land was invisible and lacking all shape," he teaches us precisely how it came to be invisible and lacking all shape, adding, "Darkness was over the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the water."[6] Notice in this case, I ask you, the economy of the blessed author, how he does not describe all created things individually, but teaches us which items were produced together by mentioning heaven and earth and passing over the rest. (33c) I mean, he had made no mention of the creation of the waters, but then said, "Darkness was over the deep, and the Spirit of God

4. Jn 7.37–38.
5. Cf. Homily 1, note 2 above.
6. Gn 1.2.

moved over the water" this, you see, was covering the face of the earth, darkness I mean, and the depths of water. From this we learned that all that could be seen was depths of water, covered in darkness and having need of the wise creator to remove all this shapelessness and bring everything to a condition of order.

(4) "Darkness," the text says, "was over the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the water." What is meant by that part of the text, "The Spirit of God moved over the water"? It seems to me to mean this, that some lifegiving force was present in the waters: it wasn't simply water that was stationary and immobile, but moving and possessed of some vital power. (33d) I mean, what doesn't move is quite useless, whereas what moves is capable of many things. So, to teach us that this water, great and cumbersome as it was, had some vital power, he says, "The Spirit of God moved over the water." It is not without reason[7] that Sacred Scripture makes this early comment. Instead, it intends later to describe to us that creatures in these waters were produced by command of the creator of all things, and so at this point it teaches the listener that water was not idly formed, but was moving, and shifting, and flowing over everything.

(5) So, when the shapeless mass of all that could be seen lay about on all sides, God the mighty artificer issued his command and the shapeless mass took on form, the surpassing beauty of this blinding light appeared and (34a) dissipated the palpable gloom, illuminating everything. "God said," the text reads, "'Let light be created,' and light was created."[8] He spoke: it was created; he gave his command: darkness was scattered and light produced. See his ineffable power? Yet there are those who ignore the sequence of the text, caught up as they are in their error, and who pay no heed to the words of blessed Moses, "In the beginning God made heaven and earth," and the following verse, "The land was invisible and lacking all shape" on account of its being obscured by the darkness and the waters, the Lord having decided (you see) to

7. Cf. Homily 2, note 6 above. 8. Gn 1.3.

create it in the beginning like this. These people say that matter was the basis for creation, and that darkness preexisted. What could be worse than this madness? You heard that "in the beginning God made heaven and earth," and that from nothing things were created, and do you say that matter was the basis for creation? Who in their right minds would come up with such idiocy? (34b) Surely the creator is not human, needing some basis for creation so as to reveal his artistry? God it is to whom all things respond as he creates them by word and command. Remember how he merely spoke, and light was created and darkness dissipated.

(6) "God separated light from darkness."[9] What is meant by "He separated"? He gave each its own place and defined its appropriate time. And when this had been done, he then gave each its proper name. The text goes on, you see: "God called the light day, and the darkness night."[10] Do you see the excellent distinction and the wonderful craftsmanship, surpassing all comment, happening by a single word and command? Do you see the degree of considerateness[11] employed by the blessed author, or rather the loving God through the tongue of the author, instructing the race of men to know the plan of created things, (34c) and who was the creator of all, and how each came into being?

(7) I mean, since mankind was yet untutored and could not understand more elaborate matters, the Holy Spirit accordingly explained everything to us by moving the author's tongue in such a way as to take account of the limitations of the listeners. To be convinced that it was on account of the incompleteness of our understanding that he employed such considerateness in his explanation, compare the approach of the Son of Thunder: when humankind had advanced along

9. Gn 1.4b. Chrysostom seems to have forgotten the first half of the verse, "God saw that the light was good;" but he soon returns to labor the point.

10. Gn 1.5.

11. Again (and again and again, as we shall see) Chrysostom invokes his favorite principle of *synkatabasis* in reference to the Scriptures and their authors divine and human; "considerateness," let it be noted—nothing of the patronizing connotation of "condescension," despite the common mistranslation.

the path to perfection, no longer did he have them move by this lower way, but led his listeners to a loftier teaching. "In the beginning was the Word," he said, you remember, "the Word was with God, and the Word was God,"[12] and added, "He was the true Light, which enlightened everyone coming into the world."[13] In other words, just as in our text this visible light, produced by command of the Lord, (34d) removed the darkness from our vision, in like manner the light coming to our minds dissipated the darkness of error, and led those in error to the truth.

(8) So let us receive the teachings of Sacred Scripture with deep gratitude, not resisting the truth nor persisting in darkness, but hastening towards the light and performing actions proper to the light and the day. That is what Paul recommends to us when he says, "Let us walk becomingly as the light of day suggests"[14] and not perform actions proper to the dark.

(9) The text goes on: "God called the light day, and he called the darkness night." Now, a detail that almost escaped us we need to pick up again. I mean, when it said, "'Let light be created,' and light was created," it added, "God saw that the light was good."[15] See there, dearly beloved, (35a) the extent of the considerateness in the language. What is the point of the remark? Is it that before the light comes into being he does not know it is beautiful, whereas after its appearance the sight of it shows its creator the beauty of what appears? What sort of sense would that make? I mean, if a man works at some piece of craftsmanship, and before he completes the thing he is making and puts final touches to it he sees the use to which he will put the thing he is making, how much more the creator of all, who by his word brings into being everything from non-being, sees that the light is good before he creates it. So why did he use this expression?

(10) This blessed author spoke this way out of considerateness for the way human beings speak. And just as people

12. Jn 1.1.
13. Jn 1.9.
14. Rom 13.13.
15. Gn 1.4a.

work on something with great care, and when they bring their efforts to completion (35b) they parade what they have made for scrutiny and commendation, so Sacred Scripture speaks in that way, showing considerateness for the limitations of our hearing when it said, "God saw that the light was good," and added, "God separated light from darkness; he called the light day, and he called the darkness night," allotting to each its own particular area and establishing limits for each right from the beginning so that they could keep to them permanently without interference. Everyone in his right mind can understand this, how from that time till this the light has not surpassed its limits, nor has darkness exceeded its due order, resulting in confusion and disruption. (35c) Really, this fact alone should suffice to oblige people obdurate in their lack of response to come to faith and obedience to the words of Sacred Scripture so as to imitate the order in the elements, respecting as they do their course uninterruptedly, and not overstep their own limitations but rather recognize the extent of their own nature.

(11) Then, when he had assigned to each its own name, he linked the two together in the words, "Evening came, and morning came: one day." He made a point of speaking of the end of the day and the end of the night as one, so as to grasp a certain order and sequence in visible things and avoid any impression of confusion.

(12) Now, we are in a position to learn from the Holy Spirit, through the tongue of this blessed author, (35d) what things were created on the first day and what things on the other days. This itself is a mark of the considerateness of the loving God. I mean, his all-powerful hand and boundless wisdom were not at a loss even to create everything in one day. Why say 'one day'? even in a brief moment. Yet it was not because of its utility to him that he produced anything that exists, since being self-sufficient he is in need of nothing. It was rather out of his loving kindness and goodness that he created everything; accordingly he created things in sequence and provided us with a clear instruction about created things through the tongue of the blessed author, so that we might learn about

them precisely and not fall into the error of those led by purely human reasoning. You see, if there are still those, despite this manner of creation, who say that things get existence from themselves, (36a) what would these people not have been rash enough to invent in their anxiety to say and do everything against their own welfare, had not God employed such considerateness and instruction?

(13) After all, what could be more pitiful and more stupid than people coming up with arguments like this, claiming that beings get existence of themselves, and withdrawing all creation from God's providence? How could you have the idea, I ask you, that so many elements and such great arrangement were being guided without anyone to supervise and control it all? Surely no ship ever managed to navigate the waves of the sea without a pilot, or soldier do brave deed with no general in command, or house stand firm with no householder in charge—whereas this immense universe (36b) and the design of all these elements could happen simply by chance without anyone present with the power to guide it all, controlling and maintaining all things in existence from his innate wisdom is this feasible?

(14) Yet why do we take further pains to demonstrate to those people what is obvious even, as the proverb has it, to the blind? Still, let us not neglect to propose the teaching of Scripture to them, making every effort to deliver them from error and lead them to truth. You see, even if they are caught up in error, the fact is nonetheless that they are people like ourselves, and it is proper for us to show every care for them, never relenting, demonstrating instead with great zeal all we have at our command, and providing them with an appropriate remedy so that at least eventually they may come to a truly healthy condition. (36c) Nothing, remember, is of such concern to God as the saving of souls. Paul makes no secret of it when he says, "He wants everybody to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth;"[16] and again God himself says, "I

16. 1 Tm 2.4.

have no wish for the death of the sinner—only for him to be converted and live."[17]

(15) The reason, you see, that he produced all created things and formed us was not that we should perish nor to consign us to punishment, but to save us, to free us from error and reward us with the enjoyment of the kingdom. This, after all, is what he prepared for us, not at this late stage after our coming into existence, but before the foundation of the world, as he himself says: "Come, you blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."[18] (36d) See the loving kindness[19] of the Lord, how even before creation, even before he produced human beings, he had prepared for them countless good things, revealing the extent of his care for our race and his wish for everyone to be saved.

(16) So, then, since we have such a Lord, so loving, so good, so gentle, let us give heed both to our own salvation and to that of our brethren. This, after all, will redound to our own salvation; not simply care for ourselves, but assistance to our neighbors as well, and conducting them to the way of truth. To learn how good a thing it is to make it possible for another to gain profit from our own welfare, listen to the biblical author speaking in the name of God: "The one who brings something noble out of dishonor will be like my own mouth."[20] What does that mean? Whoever leads his neighbors from error towards truth, (37a) it is saying, or guides them from wickedness to virtue, imitates me as far as human nature can. God himself, remember, despite his divinity, took to himself our human flesh, and for no other reason than the salvation of the human race became man. Why say, he took our human flesh and endured every other human limitation, when the

17. Ez 18.23 in Chrysostom's somewhat abbreviated text.

18. Mt 25.34.

19. Another of Chrysostom's constant themes, the *philanthropia* of God; it recurs in all the homilies, and the closing doxology invariably acknowledges it. Its frequency says much for Chrysostom's own spirituality, which is never allowed to obtrude directly into these scriptural homilies.

20. Jer 15.19.

full truth is he accepted the cross so as to free us in our sinful bondage from the curse? This is what Paul is crying out about when he says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for our sake."[21] If, then, he, being God and enjoying that ineffable nature, out of unspeakable love accepted all that for us and for our salvation, what would we not be justified in demonstrating in the case of our brethren, members with us of the one body, (37b) so as to snatch them from the jaws of the devil and guide them to the way of truth? You see, as the soul is superior to the body, to the same degree should its needs be ranked above assistance to those in need of material things, and greater reward given when through encouragement and constant instruction people lead the slothful and the recalcitrant along the right path, showing them the ugliness of evil and the beauty of a good life lived for God.

(17) Accordingly, since we are familiar with all these matters, let us converse with our neighbors about saving their soul ahead of all the other concerns of their life, and awaken them to a care for that. I mean, it is highly desirable if by constantly being reminded of this the soul can be rescued from the abyss of wickedness in which our life is passed (37c) and if we can curb the revolt of the passions which ceaselessly war against it. For this reason we need great vigilance, since our struggle is unending and a truce is out of the question. Hence, in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul says, "Our contest is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."[22] Don't think, he is saying, the contest at hand for us is accidental: the struggle is not with our peers, nor are the conditions of battle equally balanced for us. I mean, we with our bodies to hinder us are engaged in combat with disembodied forces.

(18) Still, don't be frightened: you see, if the battle is unequal, great is the power of our arms. (37d) He reminded us

21. Gal 3.13.
22. Eph 6.12 with a slight textual variation in "darkness *of this world*."

of this as if to say: Since you know the nature of the foe, do not fail in your resolve, nor lose heart for the contest; on the contrary, "don the armor of God for the purpose of being able to resist the wiles of the devil."[23] His wiles, after all, are many, that is to say, the ways by which he endeavours to trip up the unwary; we should take care to recognize them so as to avoid the attempts he makes and to allow him no inroads. Instead, we should keep our tongue in check, our eyes away from danger and our mind pure, and be constantly at the ready for battle, as though some wild beast were pressing upon us and endeavouring to get the better of us.

(19) For this reason, that towering genius, the teacher of the gentiles, the whole world's tongue, who (38a) spared no pains when the salvation of his disciples was in question, has this to say: "Don the armor of God," and adds, in words that are meant for our protection from every quarter and that render us invincible: "Stand firm, then, your loins girt with truth, wearing the breastplate of faith, your feet shod in readiness to proclaim the gospel of peace, above all else taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the burning shafts of the evil one; take also the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, God's word."[24] See how he has armed every part of us? As if we were on the point of going into battle, he has protected firstly our loins so that we can run faster; then he put on the breastplate (38b) to prevent our being hit with spears, protected our feet, and armed us at all points with faith. Faith, he says, note faith will be able to quench the burning shafts of the evil one. What are the devil's shafts? Evil desires, unclean thoughts, deadly passions—lust, envy, jealousy, pride, hatred, avarice, and every other form of laxity. All these, he says, the sword of the Spirit can quell. Why say quell? It can remove the very head of the enemy. Do you see how he encouraged his disciples, how he rendered them tougher than steel after being softer than wax? You see, since our contest is not against flesh and blood but against incor-

23. Eph 6.11.
24. Eph 6.14–17, again with some textual individuality.

poreal powers, he has accordingly armed us with weapons not of the flesh (38c) but of the spirit, burnished to such an extent that the evil demon is powerless to resist their splendor.

(20) Armed therefore with these weapons, let us not tremble at the contest, flee the onset of battle, or prove fainthearted. After all, as long as we are on the alert, that evil demon would never get the better of our weapons' strength, provided we are intent on rendering his stratagems ineffectual. On the other hand, should we relax our vigilance, it will be all to no avail: the enemy of our salvation is ever on the watch and tries everything against our salvation. So let us protect ourselves from every quarter, exercising restraint in speech, refraining from any behavior likely to harm us, and along with abstinence from food (38d) and every other virtue let us give an example of generosity towards the poor in the knowledge of the great reward laid up for us from our care for them. Scripture says, remember, "The person who takes pity on the poor lodges a claim with God."[25] Notice how this lending operates in a strange way you would not expect: the one who takes the loan is different from the one who makes himself liable for it. Not only that, but also the fact that in this case of lending we incur no resentment or any other disadvantage. That is to say, he does not promise to give a hundred per cent on the loan, as is customary with us, but a hundred times the amount lent. Nor does he stop at that: this reward comes to us in this present life, and life everlasting in the hereafter. In this life, if anyone promised to return to us twice the amount lent, we would willingly make available all our possessions, (39a) despite all the resentment and all the wiles frequently encountered in greedy people.

(21) You know that many people of quite exalted standing renege on repayment of a loan, either resisting with bad grace or being unable to pay because of poverty, as often happens. But, in the case of the Lord of all, there is no room for thinking this; on the contrary, the loan is proof against loss, he guarantees to return in good time one hundredfold what was

25. Prv 19.17.

deposited, and he keeps in reserve for us life everlasting hereafter. So what excuse will be left to us in future if we are negligent and fail to gain a hundredfold in place of the little we have, the future in place of the present, the eternal in place of the temporal, heedlessly locking our money away behind doors and barricades, preferring to leave it lying idle instead of making it available to the needy now so as in the future to count on support from them? Scripture says, remember, (39b) "Make friends with ill-gotten gains so that, when you go down in the world, they may welcome you into their eternal dwellings."[26]

(22) I know that many people are not heeding what I am saying; instead, they take it as stuff and nonsense, and give no attention to our words. For my part, I'm sorry about it and regret that nothing can reach people like that—not even life's experience, nor all that God promises, not even fear of what lies ahead, nor the instruction they receive from me each day. I will not desist from giving this kind of advice until I manage to win them over to a better state of mind, drawing them from their frenzied stupor which avarice brought upon them by dulling their intellect. I am confident, you see, confident that, with the grace of God, the persistence of our preaching (39c), and the careful attention that is a fruit of fasting, can release them even at this late hour from this crippling affliction and return them to perfect health; thus they will be freed from the punishment awaiting such people, and we can rid them of their faintheartedness, returning the glory for everything to the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit; now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

26. Lk 16.9.

HOMILY 4

"God said, 'Let a firmament be made in the middle of the water, and let it keep one body of water from the other.' This is what happened."[1]

WITNESSING AS I DO, dearly beloved, your daily gathering here with such enthusiasm, I am filled with deep satisfaction, and I do not fail to praise the loving God for your progress. I mean, just as hunger is a sign of bodily health, (39d) so, too, interest in listening to the divine sayings would be taken by anyone as a sure pointer to spiritual well-being. Accordingly, our Lord Jesus Christ too, in the Beatitudes pronounced on the Mount, declared, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will have their fill."[2] So who could adequately commend you, now that you have already received this blessing from the Lord of all, and are looking forward to so many more good things from him? Our Lord, you see, is like that: when he sees a soul seeking the things of the Spirit with great desire and earnest zeal, he bestows on it his graces in abundance.

(2) Hence, with a view to your greater benefit, I, too, look forward to being the occasion of an instructive sermon that will lead to an increase (40a) in your love. I mean, for you and your improvement we undergo any effort so that you too may climb more rapidly to the heights of virtue and become teachers about life in God to all those who associate with you, and that we may feel comfortable in more forthright speech seeing that our effort was not in vain or to no purpose. On the con-

1. Gn 1.6. "Firmament" reflects the Greek and Latin versions' attempts to grapple with a difficult original notion. Chrysostom in commenting later in the homily on v.7 is unwilling to reach precision on its meaning.

2. Mt 5.6.

trary, this spiritual seed germinates day by day; what happened with the Sower in the Gospel has not happened in our case. You remember that in the parable one lot survived and three perished: the handful of seeds that were scattered along the road did not germinate, those that fell among thorns were strangled, and the others that were sown on stony ground and stayed on the surface were unable to bear any fruit, (40b) whereas finally through God's love we look forward to a yield from the seed that was sown on good ground—some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.[3]

(3) This increases our enthusiasm, this enlivens our understanding—to know that it is not idly or in vain that we are delivering our remarks, but that you welcome what we have to say with attentive hearing and alert minds. In saying this I am not flattering you, my dear people; I am simply gauging your enthusiasm from what was said yesterday. I mean, I could see you were all agog at the instruction given and made every effort lest by chance any part of the sermon should pass unheeded; in particular, the flood of applause was eloquent testimony of the favor my words found with you. When someone listens to the spoken word willingly, obviously it is riveted in his memory; he stores it up in the recesses of his mind and makes sure it does not escape him. (40c) So, too, who could worthily praise you or bless us for preaching to willing ears? Scripture says, remember, "Blessed is the one who preaches to willing ears."[4] This is one of the fruits of fasting, this is a remedy which works towards the salvation of our souls. And if in the beginning, and from the introduction, this strength is revealed, how much greater do you suppose the benefit will be in the days to come? Just be sure, I beseech you, to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling"[5] and allow the enemy no way of undermining your salvation. Remember that it drives him to distraction to see the spiritual riches you now have, and he prowls around like a roaring lion seeking some-

3. Cf. Mt 13.3–8.
4. Sir 25.9 in a variant of the LXX.
5. Phil 2.12.

one to devour.[6] But if you are careful, he will, with the grace of God, wreak no harm.

(4) This is the kind of spiritual armor, after all, (40d) with which the grace of the Spirit has clad us, as we taught you, my dear people, yesterday. So if we are constantly protected in all our limbs with this armor, none of the shafts aimed by the enemy will be able to strike us; instead, they will return to him unsuccessful. The grace of God, you see, makes us stronger than steel and quite invincible, if we want it so. So just as anyone who strikes steel does the steel no harm but only impairs his own strength, and anyone kicking out at spurs bloodies his own feet, so too in our case will things turn out badly for the enemy of our salvation, provided we protect ourselves constantly with the armor supplied us from the grace of the Spirit. I mean, such is its efficacy that the enemy could not resist the brightness emanating from it; instead, his eyes would be blinded (41a) by its brilliance. So let us arm ourselves completely, I beg you, with this armor, and in this guise go out in public, mix with our friends, and engage in business. Why say in public? Let us also bear this protection when coming together in church, returning home, sleeping and waking, and never lay it aside throughout our whole life; after all, it travels with us, and proves a great basis for our confidence wherever we go. You see, it doesn't weigh our body down like material armor; on the contrary, it brightens it, makes it nimble and increases its strength—provided we keep it so clean day by day that the shining beams of its radiance blind the eyes of the evil demon (41b) who stops at nothing to undermine our salvation.

(5) Well, now, since we have armed you sufficiently, let us lay before you the customary meal. Let us propose to you, dear people, what follows the part commented on yesterday, and have as our wonderful host again blessed Moses, great author that he is and spokesman of this beautiful doctrine. So let us see what it is he wants to teach us today and attend closely to his words. After all, it is not by his own power he speaks; in-

6. Cf. 1 Pt 5.8.

stead, whatever the grace of the Spirit inspires in him, this he utters with his own tongue for the instruction of humankind.[7] Having thus completed the account of the first day, and having said after the creation of light, "Evening came, and morning came: one day," he says further, (41c) "And God said 'Let a firmament be made in the middle of the water, and let it keep one body of water separate from the other.'" Notice here, dearly beloved, the sequence of the teaching. What I mean is that he first brought to our attention, after the creation of heaven and earth, the fact that "the earth was invisible and lacking all shape," and supplied the explanation for it—namely, it was invisible because it was concealed by darkness and water (you recall that everything consisted of darkness and water, and nothing else).[8] Then, at the command of the Lord, light was created and a separation made between light and darkness; one received the name day and the other night. His intention once again is to teach us that just as by producing the light God could cleave the darkness and assigned to each its appropriate name, so by his command he made a division in the mass of water.

(6) (41d) Take note of such ineffable power, which surpasses all human imagining. I mean, he simply commands, and one element comes into being while another gives way to it. "God said, "'Let a firmament be made in the middle of the water, and let it keep one body of water separate from the other.'" What does that mean, "'Let a firmament be made'"? As if someone were to say in human language, Let there be some sort of barrier and division to come between them and make a separation. And, so that you may learn the extraordinary obedience of the elements and the exceeding power of the Creator, he adds, "This is what happened." God had only to speak, and the effect followed immediately.

7. Chrysostom is utterly convinced of the inspiration of Scripture and of the role of its human and divine authors. This phrasing occurs over and over again, together with the closing reference to the saving purpose of scriptural inspiration. Cf. *St. John Chrysostom's Teaching on Inspiration in his Old Testament Homilies* 84–94.

8. As was remarked on v.2 in Homily 2, Chrysostom is content with this unlikely reading, "invisible," ignorant as he is of the Heb. text.

(7) The text goes on: "God made the firmament, and God divided the water which was below the firmament from the water which was above the firmament."[9] That is to say, once the firmament existed, he ordered some of the water (42a) to go below the firmament, and some to be on top of the firmament. Now, what would you say this means, the firmament? Water that has congealed, or some air that has been compressed, or some other substance? No sensible person would be rash enough to make a decision on it. Instead, it is better to be quite grateful and ready to accept what is told us and not reach beyond the limits of our own nature by meddling in matters beyond us, but rather to know only the simple fact and keep it within us—namely, that by the Lord's command the firmament was produced, causing division of the waters, keeping some below and being able to carry the rest elevated on top of it.

(8) "The Lord called the firmament heaven."[10] Notice how Sacred Scripture here too employs the same sequence of thought. Just as it said yesterday, "'Let there be light,'" (42b) and after it was created added, "'Let there be separation between light'" and darkness, and thus the light was called day, so too today it said, "Let a firmament be made in the middle of the water." Then, as with the light, so too here it taught us the use of the firmament, saying, "for the purpose of keeping one body of water separate from the other." And when it made its use clear to us, as it had imposed a name on the light, so too it put a label on the firmament: "He called the firmament heaven," as we saw. How is it, you will say, some people want to claim many heavens were created? They don't get this teaching from Sacred Scripture, but base it on their own reasoning. I mean, blessed Moses teaches us nothing more than this; that is, he says, "In the beginning (42c) God made heaven and earth;" then, having taught us the reason why the earth happened to be invisible—that it was concealed by darkness and the waters of the abyss—he employs a kind of order and sequence by saying after the creation of light, "The Lord said,

9. Gn 1.7. 10. Gn 1.8.

'Let a firmament be made.'" He then taught us in a precise manner the purpose of the firmament in saying, "so as to keep one body of water from the other," and next gave the name heaven to this same firmament which caused division of the waters. So after this kind of teaching who could take any notice of the people who want to speak off the cuff from their own imagining and be so bold as to propose many heavens against the evidence of Sacred Scripture? But, they claim, see how blessed David sang the praises of God in words like these: "Praise him, heaven of heavens."[11] Don't worry, dearly beloved, don't think Sacred Scripture ever contradicts itself, (42d) learn instead the truth of what it says, hold fast what it teaches in truth, and close your ears to those who speak against it.

(9) To grasp the point I'm trying to make, listen very carefully so as not to be easily upset by people prepared to say the first thing that comes into their head. All the sacred books of the Old Testament were originally composed in Hebrew; everybody would agree with us on this. Not many years before the coming of Christ, King Ptolemy, who was very keen on collecting books and had collected many other ones of different kinds, felt obliged to add the Old Testament books to his collection as well. So he summoned some of the Jews living in Jerusalem, and ordered them to translate the books into Greek; this was in fact brought to completion for him.[12] The upshot of this work of divine providence was that (43a) the benefit of the Old Testament was now available not only to people who knew Hebrew but also to anyone living anywhere in the world. What makes this remarkable and ironic is that the initiative for this was taken not by people with belief in Judaism but by a man devoted to idols and opposed in his beliefs to true religion. You see, everything turns out like this

11. Ps 148.4.

12. In relaying the legend of the formation of the LXX, Chrysostom shows his uncritical attitude that emerges constantly—as well, perhaps, his judgement that homilies were not the occasion for troubling his simple (?) congregation with scholarly niceties. Cf. Introduction 15.

under the providence of our Lord: the principles of truth are always vindicated by the people who oppose them.

(10) It was not without purpose that I told this story to you; rather, it was for you, dearly beloved, to know that the Old Testament books were not composed in this language—ours, I mean—but in Hebrew. Now, those with a precise knowledge of that language tell us that among the Hebrews the word 'heaven' is used in the plural, (43b) and those who know the language of the Syrians confirm this.[13] In that language—that is, the language they use—no one would say 'heaven', but 'the heavens'. So it is logical that the words spoken by the blessed David, "the heaven of heavens," have that form, not because there are several heavens (the blessed Moses, remember, taught us that) but because it is idiomatic in Hebrew to use the name of a single thing in the plural; if there were several heavens, the Holy Spirit would not have neglected to teach us through the tongue of this blessed author about the creation of the other ones. Keep a close grasp on these matters, I beg you, so as to be able to curb those people wanting to come up with objections against the Church, and be quite sure in your knowledge of the efficacy of what is contained in the Sacred Scriptures. (43c) That, after all, is the reason why you gather here so regularly, and why we provide you with such abundant instruction, so that you may be well prepared for anyone seeking to indoctrinate you.

(11) But let us move on to what follows, if you don't mind. "God called the firmament heaven," the text says; "and God saw that it was good." Notice the extent of the considerateness of the language to accommodate human limitations. That is to say, just as at the creation of light the text said, "He saw it was good," so too now in the case of heaven—that is, the firmament—it says, "God saw it was good," teaching us in this way its extraordinary beauty. I mean, who could fail to be utterly amazed that the firmament in all this period has kept its

13. Chrysostom thus admits his ignorance of the original language of the OT—significant for a commentator on *Genesis*. His own instructor in exegesis, Diodore of Tarsus, was similarly handicapped. Cf. Introduction 3 & 15.

beauty unimpaired, and that the more time passes, so much the more this beauty increases. (43d) After all, what could be more beautiful than the thing that gains commendation from the Creator? I mean, if we see a human being's work brought to completion and marvel at its design, its position, its beauty, its proportion, its symmetry, and everything else about it, how could anyone adequately praise what God has produced, particularly when it has won the praise of the Lord himself? You see, this is said out of considerateness for us, and you will notice the same words used in the case of each created thing, refuting in anticipation the temerity of those who later will be disposed to sharpen their tongue against God's creation and raise the question, why did this and that come into being? So, to check those people ahead of time in their endeavours to voice that opinion, the text says, "God saw that it was good." When you hear that God "saw" and God "praised", (44a) take the word in a sense proper to God. That is to say, the Creator knew the beauty of the created thing before he created it, whereas we are human beings and encompassed with such limitations that we cannot understand it in any other way; accordingly, he directed the tongue of the blessed author to make use of the clumsiness of these words for the instruction of the human race.[14]

(12) So, whenever you raise your eyes and admire the beauty of heaven, its immensity, its usefulness to us, then move from there to its creator, as a wise man has said: "From the magnitude and beauty of creatures we can by comparison see the creator."[15] See too the Lord's power, how great it is, even from the creation of these elements. I mean, any right-minded person who is prepared to scan visible things each day—but why say created things each day? (44b) if you only consider carefully your own makeup, you will see through these details God's ineffable power beyond all description. If these visible

14. Chrysostom thus sets out his profound understanding of the Scriptures as exemplifying both divine considerateness (*synkatabasis*) for human limitations (*astheneia*—not "weakness") and also divine transcendence. It is a typically Eastern and specifically Antiochene understanding.

15. Wis 13.5.

things suffice to teach us the magnitude of the Creator's power, and if you attain to the unseen powers, and raise your mind to the hosts of the angels, the archangels, the powers above, the thrones, the dominations, the principalities, the powers, the cherubim, the seraphim—what understanding, what description is of any avail to unfold his greatness? Remember the blessed author David: if in studying the order of visible things he cried out, "How your works are magnified, O Lord; you have made everything in wisdom"[16]—David, a man endowed so generously with the Spirit and deemed worthy to know the obscure and hidden things of the Lord's wisdom—(44c) what could we say, dust and ashes that we are, obliged constantly to move with head bowed, and to gape at the unspeakable love of the Lord of all? And why do I quote the psalmist? I mean, blessed Paul, that spirit soaring to heaven, clad in a body yet contending with disembodied powers, treading the earth yet scouring the heavens in his enthusiasm, falling in with one part of God's design (I mean that to do with Jews and Gentiles, rejected by the former and taken possession of by the latter)—Paul it was who cried out in utter bewilderment and stupor, "O the depth of the wealth of God's wisdom and knowledge: how inscrutable his judgements and unsearchable his ways."[17]

(13) Now, on this matter, I would address to those rash enough to be inquisitive about the generation of the Son of God (44d) and anxious to undermine the status of the Holy Spirit the following mild enquiry: whence springs the vehemence of your daring, I ask you? what drunken stupor leads you to rush into such extreme folly? After all, if a man of such ability and stature as Paul says God's judgements—that is, his planning and government—are inscrutable (he did not say incomprehensible, just inscrutable, so that no one could plot them), and God's ways, in his words, are unsearchable, meaning the same thing, referring to his dispositions and com-

16. Ps 104.24.

17. Rom 11.33. Even in a *Genesis* commentary, Chrysostom does not conceal his great admiration and fellow-feeling for Paul. He sees him as "the world's teacher" and in prophetic insight extols a man who can suffer for his principles.

mands as ways, how is it that you are rash enough to be inquisitive about the very being of the Only-begotten and to minimize as far as you can the status of the Holy Spirit?[18] Observe, dearly beloved, how wrong it is not to attend precisely to the contents of Sacred Scripture. I mean, if these people accepted the teachings from Sacred Scripture with the proper dispositions and didn't invent their own from their own reasoning, (45a) they would never have been caught in such folly. Let us then, on the contrary, use the same persistence in making the teachings of Sacred Scripture ring in their ears, while stopping our own ears to their baleful doctrines.

(14) Now, I have no idea how we came to be drawn from the theme of our sermon into that distraction and lose the thread; so we must pick up the sermon again by retracing our steps. The text says: "God called the firmament heaven, and God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came: a second day." After giving the firmament its name and commending what had been created, he brought the second day to a close, and said, "Evening came and morning came, a second day." See how he teaches us with precision, calling the end of the light evening and the end of the night morning, (45b) and naming the whole period day lest we be misled into thinking the evening is the end of the day, instead of having a clear understanding that one day comprises the duration of both parts. Thus it would be correct to say that evening is the end of the light; but daybreak, that is, the end of the night, is the duration of a day. This, after all, is what Scripture wants to indicate by saying, "Evening came and morning came: a second day."

(15) Perhaps we have drawn out the point to great length, no longer in control of the subject but swept along, you might say, by the very sequence of the words as though by a wild tor-

18. Chrysostom's editors from De Montfaucon note his ready polemic against trinitarian heretics of the day, especially the Anomians (Grk. *anomios*, "unlike, unequal"). For a recent survey of contemporary movements, cf. Y. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* I, English translation (London 1983) 73–84.

rent. You are responsible for this through your willing attention to what we say. I mean, nothing can so spur the preacher and stimulate him to greater fertility of thought as the enthusiasm of his listeners. (45c) Just as listeners who are recalcitrant and listless reduce even an able speaker to lethargy, so it happens that, by the grace of God and despite our being dumber than stones, you have been enough to rouse our sluggish mind, dissipate our torpor, and drive us on to say something or other useful to you and directed to your edification. Since, then, you have the good fortune to be taught by God, and according to blessed Paul you are capable also of advising others,[19] come now, I beg you, especially at this period of fasting give much attention to good living in God's designs, and don't let our sermons leave you untouched if we preach to you each day on the same topics; after all, to quote the blessed Paul, repetition is no burden to me, and it is a precaution for you.[20] Our soul, remember, is sluggish and needs constant reminders. (45d) Just as this body of ours requires each day its bodily nourishment so as not to develop extreme weakness and be unable to exert itself, so too our soul needs spiritual nourishment and excellent regimen if it is to develop a certain affinity with good and remain unvanquished in the struggle against the wiles of the evil one.

(16) Accordingly, let us each day be concerned with the value of this exercise, let us scrutinize our conduct and not lose heart; let us render an account to ourselves both of what comes in and of what goes out—what we utter that is of some use and what words we pronounce to no effect, and again what value there is to our soul in what we receive through hearing and likewise what has the capacity to harm in what we are responsible for. Let us impose some rules and regulations on our tongue so as initially to keep a check (46a) on our speech and only then deliver what we have to say. Let us train our mind not to give vent to harmful thoughts; instead, should something of that kind gain entry from outside, banish it as

19. Cf. Rom 15.14. 20. Phil 3.1.

unnecessary and likely to cause harm, or if it rises inside us, expel it rapidly with a pious thought, and let us not think that fasting only till evening suffices for our salvation.

(17) After all, if the loving Lord said to the hardhearted Jews through the prophet: "Behold those seventy years: surely it was not for me that you kept that fast? And if you eat and drink, is it not for yourselves that you eat and drink? This is what the Lord, mighty ruler, says: Deliver just judgements, show mercy and pity each of you to your neighbor, do not oppress widow or orphan, sojourner or poor person, (46b) and let none of you plot evil against your brother in your heart."[21] In other words, if those people sitting in darkness and caught up in the shadow of error gained no benefit merely from fasting without performing those other good works or expelling from their heart evil intended against their neighbor, what sort of excuse can we offer of whom more is required—not simply commanded to abstain from that, but even obliged to love our enemies and be kind to them? And why do I say 'be kind'? Also to pray for them, and beseech the Lord and implore his providence in their behalf. After all, this most of all will be a recommendation for us on that fearful day, and our best insurance against our sins, if we are disposed in this way towards our enemies. (46c) I mean, even if the commandment is exceedingly rigorous, provided you keep in mind the prize laid up for those who do right, it will seem nothing at all, even though it is in fact very rigorous. Why is that? Scripture says: "If you do this, you will be like my father in heaven."[22] To make the point clearer to us, it added: "Because he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good"; that is, it is saying, you are imitating God as far as human beings can. I mean, just as he makes the sun rise not only on the just but also on those who do evil, and provides rain and seasonal storms not only to the good but also to the evil, so you too, if you love not only those who love you but also those badly disposed to you, are imitating your Lord as far as you can.

21. Zec 7.5,6,9,10. 22. Cf. Mt 5.45.

(18) (46d) Do you see how he has elevated to the highest pinnacle the person capable of achieving this virtue? Don't, however, think only of the difficulty of the matter, dearly beloved, but consider first of all in your heart the great dignity you would stand to gain; and let the opportunity for dignity make light for you of what is heavy and burdensome. Should you not, after all, recognize the grace given you in finding an opportunity through your kindness to your enemy of having opened for you the doors to a confident approach to God and of making atonement for your sins? Do you, perchance, on the contrary, relish the prospect of taking vengeance on your enemy and repaying in kind and even worse the one badly disposed to you? What advantage will that be when you gain no benefit from it and are liable to undergo punishment for it in that dread tribunal for breaking its laws? Tell me: if some (47a) earthly king made it a law to look after one's enemies under punishment of death, would not everyone for fear of this bodily death hasten to fulfil the law? So what a dreadful accusation does that person deserve who, because of bodily death (which in any event the necessity of nature brings us without exception), is ready to do anything with death in mind—hardly a source of encouragement—but thinks less of the law made by the Lord of all.

(19) While speaking on this subject, however, I have forgotten those who do not even show the same love to those who love them. Who then will eventually snatch us from that punishment when we are not simply far from fulfilling that commandment (47b) but don't do even what the publicans do? Scripture says: "If you love those who love you, what great deed is that? Do not even the publicans do that?"[23] Since therefore this is not done by us, what prospect of salvation is there for us? So, I beg you, let us not be lacking in compassion, but let us instead subdue our thoughts, and first learn to surpass our neighbor in love and, according to the blessed Paul, to regard others as more eminent in dignity than our-

23. Mt 5.46 in Chrysostom's variant text.

selves;[24] not to resist being diminished but wanting to overcome; not to dominate but to provide a clearer and warmer affection for those who love us. After all, this it is that especially sustains and reinforces our life, and in this we are distinguished from the brutes and beasts, namely, (47c) being able if we wish to maintain the order appropriate to us and to manifest a warm fellow-feeling towards our neighbors; next, to restrain our thinking, and to crush the wild and unruly creature—madness I call it—and remind it of the trial before the dread tribunal and teach it that, should peace be made with our enemies, we will win great reward, whereas if discord still continues, we will undergo a severe judgement. In other words, we should not squander the time idly and to no purpose but, day by day, and hour by hour, keep before our eyes the Lord's judgment, and the thought of what things are calculated to produce great confidence in us and what will only increase our punishment.

(20) Turning these things over (47d) in our mind like this, let us get the better of our feelings, restrain the impulses of the flesh, and mortify, as the blessed Paul puts it, "what is earthly in you, immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire," anger, covetousness, vainglory, slander.[25] If we render ourselves dead to these desires, so that they cannot work in us, we shall be able to receive the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control."[26] Let this be the difference between the Christian and the unbeliever; let these be our talisman, let us not simply bear the name like an ornament, nor boast only of appearances; nay rather, even should we possess those virtues (48a) we have enumerated, let us not then boast, but so much the more humble ourselves. Scripture says, after all, "When you have done all these things, say, We are unprofitable servants."[27] If it proves true that we have taken such care and given thought to our salvation, we will be able to gain the greatest benefit, rescue ourselves from eventual punishment,

24. Phil 2.3.
25. Cf. Col 3.5–8.
26. Gal 5.22–23.
27. Lk 17.10.

and become in the eyes of onlookers teachers of what works for their good. So we will pass this present life with care and be judged worthy of loving kindness in the life to come, which it will hopefully be our lot to experience, and the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father be glory, power and honor for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 5

"God said: 'Let the water under heaven be gathered together into one mass, and let dry land appear.'"[1]

COME NOW, DEARLY BELOVED, (48b) today also let us set before you the feast that comes from the words of the blessed Moses, and observe carefully what was created by the Lord on the third day. To begin with an example: men digging in gold-bearing soil, when they spy some seams of gold dust, don't stop until they have broken the seams open, got right to the very bottom of it and taken from the spot great wealth.[2] So much the more should we, who have no intention of searching for gold dust but are expecting to find ineffable treasure, seek it daily so as to gain great wealth from the spiritual plenty to be found here, and so return home. (48c) After all, in the former case material wealth often brought dangers to the people gaining it, and provided only brief enjoyment before it disappeared altogether and the dangers set in, either from attacks by slanderers, or robbers, or burglars, or house guards who turned to theft and absconded.

(2) In the present case, on the contrary, there is no fear of anything like that; I mean, this spiritual treasure is proof against theft: when it is stored in the recesses of our mind, it is secure against every stratagem, provided we don't become slothful and give entry to the one anxious to deprive us of it. Our enemy, remember (I mean the wicked demon), when he sees spiritual wealth accumulated, grinds his teeth, and rages, and displays great vigilance so as to take advantage of the

1. Gn 1.9.

2. Cf. Homily 3, note 3 above for these traditional analogies of Chrysostom's.

right moment (48d) to steal something of what we have within us. No such moment will suit his convenience provided we are not guilty of sloth; it behoves us therefore to remain constantly on the alert and to impede his every approach. If, in fact, he sees us awake and displaying great vigilance and he attacks us once or twice only to find his efforts are to no avail, he will eventually be shamed into giving up in the knowledge that there is nothing further he can do in the face of our resistance. Accordingly, as we realize that we cannot avoid being at war all our life here below, so let us arm ourselves, on the understanding that we have the enemy always at our door, and mount guard unremittingly so as not to give him opportunity for assault by relaxing our vigilance a little once or twice.

(3) Have you noticed (49a) how much provision people with many possessions make for their protection when they expect an enemy attack? Some lock them up behind doors and bars, taking every precaution; others hide them underground so as to escape all detection. We should in fact follow the same procedure in amassing the wealth of virtue: we should guard it with great care, not expose it to the gaze of all but conceal it in the inmost recesses of our heart, and thus repel all the attacks of the one anxious to despoil us of it; in this way we will keep it intact and be able to leave this life with some resource for the life hereafter. Think of people who happen to be living in a foreign land: when they have in mind to return home, for a long time beforehand they begin to develop an enthusiasm and take pains to collect enough provisions (49b) to enable them to last the length of the journey so as not to fall victim to hunger. It should be exactly like this in our case: forced to live here below like people in a strange land (and in fact we are all strangers and foreigners in that regard) we should really be on the lookout for the resources that come from spiritual behavior and store them up for the journey, so that whenever the Lord bids us set out for our true homeland, we may be ready and may bring some of those resources with us and have the rest sent on ahead. Such, after all, is the nature of these resources: what we would wish to store up for ourselves

through the performance of these good deeds arrives there before us and opens the doors of confidence for us with the Lord, smoothing the entrance for us in advance so that we enter with great peace of mind and encounter much goodwill from the judge.

(4) To learn, dearly beloved, (49c) that this is the way these things happen, consider, I ask you, that the person who practises almsgiving in generous measure and lives his life on earth in the strength of a good conscience will find when he passes on from here great kindness at the hands of the judge, and will hear those blessed words among the rest, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, because I was hungry and you gave me something to eat."[3] You would find the very same to be true in the case of the other virtues. It will prove to be true with the confession of sins, and with prayers said in earnestness. You see, when in this present life we are able to wipe away our offenses through confession and find pardon from the Lord, we go from there cleansed of our sins, and we find great (49d) confidence given us. By the same token it is impossible for someone not cleansed of his sins in this life to find consolation afterwards in the next. Scripture says, remember, "In the underworld who will confess his faith in you?"[4] And rightly so; after all, this is the time of contests, struggles and conflicts, whereas that will be the time for rewards, prizes and laurels. So let us strive while we are still engaged in the arena so that, when it comes to the time that we would be due to receive the laurels and the reward of effort, we may be found not amongst the disgraced but amongst those confidently receiving the crown upon their head.

(5) It is not idly or to no purpose that we propose these matters to you in your goodness; instead, our intention is day by day to bring to your mind good deeds so that you may be found perfect and well prepared (50a) and conspicuous for virtue in daily living. Thus you will be above reproach or contamination as blameless children of God, and will "shine as

3. Mt 25.34–35. 4. Ps 6.5.

lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, as our pride and joy, as you await the day of the Lord,"[5] so that merely by your comportment you will benefit those with whom you associate: by sharing in converse with you they will partake also of the spiritual fragrance that accompanies you, and of your excellent way of life. After all, the company of rogues is bound to affect those who mix with them, as the blessed Paul says, "Evil association corrupts good manners;"[6] and in just the same way the company of good people benefits those who frequent them.

(6) Accordingly, the loving Lord has allowed the good to live amongst the wicked so that these latter may gain something from their company, and may not persist forever in their evil-doing but may instead be brought to their senses by the sight of good people and profit somewhat from their company. (50b) So great, you see, is the power of virtue that even those who don't possess it revere it greatly and pay it great tribute. By the same token, in fact, evil in its turn is constantly under attack even by those who exemplify it themselves, so plain and obvious is it to everyone, and you won't find anyone quick to own up to it; instead, the remarkable thing is that the evil things they strive to perpetrate in fact, these they often condemn in word and prefer most people didn't know about. This is a mark of God's loving kindness, which he has shown in the case of humankind, that he has implanted in each of us a conscience that is above distortion, able to distinguish truly evil actions from those that aren't. This has the effect of robbing us of any plea that we fell into sin through ignorance instead of sloth of spirit and neglect of virtue.[7]

(7) Let us hour by hour turn these thoughts over in our mind (50c) and keep our own salvation [to the] foremost in our thinking, lest with the passage of time we forget ourselves and fall into the greatest disaster.

5. Phil 2.15–16.

6. 1 Cor 15.33, where Paul, of course, is quoting the pagan dramatist Menander.

7. Again *rhathumia*, "indifference, sloth," is the capital sin for Chrysostom. Cf. Homily 1, note 18 above.

(8) But enough of such introductions; let us now listen, if you don't mind, to what it is the grace of the Spirit wants to teach us today as well through Moses' tongue. The text goes on: "God said, 'Let the water under heaven be gathered together into one mass, and let dry land appear.' This is what happened." Notice here, I ask you, dearly beloved, the order and wonderful sequence. I mean, it said in the beginning that "the earth was invisible and lacking all shape" for the reason that it was concealed by the darkness and the waters; then on the second day he ordered the firmament to be made, and caused the separation of the waters, calling the firmament heaven. Now he further teaches us that on the third day he directed that the water under heaven (50d) that is, under the firmament—should come together into one mass, should make room, and the dry land should appear; that is what happened. In other words, since everything was filled with water, he orders the immensity of waters to come together into one mass, so that there would be a way for the dry land to appear.

(9) Note how he sets out for us in detail the orderly arrangement and beauty of it all. "That is what happened," it says. How? In the way the Lord directed. He simply spoke, and the work followed. You see, this is God's way: created things are governed by his will. "The water under heaven was gathered together into its masses, and the dry land appeared."[8] Just as in the case of the light, when darkness was everywhere, he ordered the creation of the light, and caused a division between the light and the darkness, so as to assign one to the day and the other to the night, and likewise in the case of the waters he created the firmament, (51a) and bade one lot take the upper place and the other lot be below the firmament, so too in this case he orders this second lot of water which was under the firmament to run together into one mass so that the dry land may appear and he may then give it its own name, as with the light and the darkness. The text says, remember, "The waters were gathered together into

8. The LXX, in adding this additional explanatory sentence, is departing from most Heb. Mss.

their masses, and the dry land appeared; God called the dry land earth." Do you see, dearly beloved, how the earth, which was previously invisible and lacking all shape through being hidden by the waters as though under covers, he unveils, as it were, and shows its face at long last, giving it its own name.

(10) The text goes on: "The masses of the waters he called seas."[9] Notice that the waters also got their own name. To make a comparison: when a first-rate craftsman plans to fashion a vessel from his own skill, he doesn't give it a name until he has brought his creation to completion. (51b) Just so, the loving Lord does not give names to the elements until he assigns them to their own place through his own arrangement. So after the earth received its own name and took its own shape, the waters too being now gathered together were in their turn ready to receive their own name. The text says, remember, "The masses of the waters he called seas," and then added, "God saw that it was good." You see, since human nature is limited and is not capable of adequately praising the works of God, Sacred Scripture anticipates by telling us of the praise given by the Creator himself. So, when you learn that created things appeared good to the Creator himself, you have further grounds for wonder without being able any better to apply praise and eulogy. This, after all, is the kind of Lord you have: he does the kinds of things that surpass the bounds of praise by us. (51c) I mean, how could human nature adequately praise God's works or celebrate them at all?

(11) Recognize further, I ask you, in the evidence assembled here the ineffable wisdom of God the artificer. That is to say, after making visible to us the face of the earth, he further bestows upon it by his own design a pleasing aspect, beautifying its face with a profusion of seeds. "God said," the text goes on, "'Let the earth put forth a crop of vegetation, plants yielding seed, each according to its kind and likeness, and fruit trees bearing fruit with seed inside, each according to its kind upon the earth.' This is what happened."[10] What does that mean,

9. Gn 1.10b. 10. Gn 1.11.

"This is what happened"? According to the text, the Lord gave directions and at once the earth went into labor and adorned itself with its own crop of seeds. "The earth brought forth," the text goes on, "a crop of vegetation, plants yielding seed, each according to its kind and likeness, (51d) and fruit trees bearing fruit with seed inside, each according to its kind upon the earth."[11]

(12) Consider here, I ask you, dearly beloved, how everything came into being on the earth by the word of the Lord. I mean, it was no man who was the cause, or plough, or help from oxen, or effort towards it from any other source—simply that everything heard the command, and at once sprang from the earth into view. From this we learn that at present likewise what provides us with the harvest of fruits is not the effort of the farmers, or their toil, or the other labors put into farming, but before all these it is the word of God, the same as was directed to it from the beginning. For the particular purpose of correcting later human folly, Sacred Scripture gives us a precise description of everything according to the order of creation so as to offset the absurdities of people speaking idly from their own reasoning in an endeavor to assert (52a) that the assistance of the sun is responsible for the germination of the crops.

(13) There are some people who try to ascribe these things to some of the stars. For this reason the Holy Spirit teaches us that before the creation of these elements the earth heard his word and command and brought forth the plants, with no need of anything else by way of assistance. In other words, in place of anything else the earth had need only of that word that was spoken, "Let the earth put forth a crop of vegetation." So, taking our lead from Sacred Scripture, let us never tolerate those who lightly propound contrary views. I mean, even if human beings till the earth, even if they get assistance from brute beasts, and bestow great attention on the earth,

11. In these verses, Gn 1.11–12, Chrysostom follows closely the (rather inconsistent) wording of the LXX, which is not that of the Heb. Masoretic text.

even if the weather is kind, and everything goes according to plan, it will be all to no avail unless the Lord wills; (52b) all the toil and trouble will be fruitless unless the hand from on high takes part and brings to fruition these efforts. Who could fail to be absolutely astonished at the thought of how the word uttered by the Lord, "'Let the earth put forth a crop of vegetation,'" penetrated to the very bowels of the earth and, as though with a veil, adorned the face of the earth with a variety of flowers? In an instant you could see the earth, which just before had been shapeless and unkempt, take on such beauty as almost to defy comparison with heaven. I mean, just as heaven would shortly be adorned with a variety of stars, so too the earth was beautified with a range of flowers to such an extent that even the Creator was moved to commendation: "God saw," the text says, remember, "that it was good."

(14) Does it occur to you how in the case of each of the created realities the text shows (52c) the Creator rendering praise, with the result that later human beings learn from this and pass from the creatures to the Creator? That is to say, if created things are of such a kind that they overwhelm human beings, and no one could adequately praise them, what could anyone say about the Creator himself? The text says: "God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning came: a third day."[12] Do you see how by the repetition of the teaching it wants to impress on our understanding the force of the words? "Evening came, and morning came: a third day." You see, there was need to mention: A third day had passed. But see how in the case of each day it speaks this way: "Evening came, and morning came: a third day"—not idly or to no purpose, but to prevent our confusing the order, and thinking that with evening falling the day came to an end, instead of realizing (52d) that the evening is the end of the light and the beginning of night, whereas the dawn is the end of the night and the completion of the day. This in fact is what the blessed Moses wants to teach us in saying, "Evening came, and morn-

12. Gn 1.13.

ing came: a third day." Don't be surprised, dearly beloved, if Sacred Scripture repeats this over and over again.[13] After all, even despite such insistence the Jews, who were already victims of error and hardened in heart, are bent on disputation by considering that the evening is the beginning of the following day; they deceive themselves and argue illogically, they still sit in darkness despite the clarity of the truth to everybody, they keep close to a lantern despite the fact that the sun spreads its rays of justice everywhere—so who could have resisted the obduracy of such idiots had there not been an exposition of teaching like this in great detail?

(15) (53a) But let them reap the reward of their own insanity. We, for our part, who have been fortunate enough to benefit from the rays of the sun, should obey the teaching of Sacred Scripture; let us follow *its* canon, place *its* wholesome doctrines within the recesses of our mind, and with protection *from it* take good care of our own welfare, avoiding whatever impairs the health of our soul and abstaining from all such harmful notions in the same way as we would noxious drugs. After all, the harm they inflict is much worse—worse, in fact, to the degree that the soul is more important than the body. You see, the death these drugs cause is for the body only, whereas things that impair the health of the soul bring to us a death that is eternal. What are these things that injure us? They are many and varied, (53b) but especially having regard for human esteem and not knowing how to scorn it. I mean, this proves a source of many evils for us: if we have any spiritual riches, this exhausts them and makes us bereft of any benefit from them. So what could be more harmful than this injury? It has the effect of depriving us of whatever we seem to have. Thus the pharisee in the Gospel turned out to be inferior to the publican: instead of keeping control of his

13. Chrysostom is committed, as we have seen above (Homily 2, note 6), to his principle of the precision of Scripture and to the fact that no detail of the text, repetitious though it may seem, is without purpose and value. Though this conviction is rooted in his belief in the inspiration of Scripture, and ultimately in the Incarnation, at times he seems obliged to rationalize in order to maintain his principle.

tongue, through it as through a door he poured out all his wealth.[14] That's how bad vainglory is.

(16) Tell me, after all, why and for what reason do you have regard for the praise of human beings? Don't you know that their praise evaporates and disappears into thin air just like a shadow or something even less substantial? (53c) Human beings are extraordinarily unreliable and inconstant: they praise you one day and revile you the next—something that would never happen in the case of God's judgement of us. So let us not make fools of ourselves, or deceive ourselves all to no purpose. I mean, if we do something good, but do not strive for it with a view simply to fulfilling the command of our Lord and becoming a familiar of his alone, we go to trouble for nothing and deprive ourselves of the fruit of the action. You see, the person who does some good deed or other with a view to gaining credit from human beings, whether or not he succeeds in enjoying it—motivation of this kind after all, failing to gain its object: whether he succeeds or falls short, he has got in this life all the reward he is going to get, and will receive nothing in the next life (53d) by way of recompense. Why? Because he forfeited the possibility of enjoying the esteem of the judge by preferring the present to the future and the esteem of human beings to the favor of the just judge. If, on the contrary, we perform some spiritual action for the sole purpose of pleasing his unsleeping eye alone before whom everything lies open and bare, the reward will be kept for us unharmed, the contents of our prize will be intact, looking forward to it will do us good and bring us great consolation in advance, the prize will be protected for us in an unassailable treasury, and eventually even the esteem of human beings will come our way. You see, this esteem is something we enjoy in great abundance when we scorn it, when we do not seek it, when we do not chase after it.

(17) Why are you surprised if this happens in the case of those pursuing spiritual philosophy, (54a) when in many cases even men of the world have particular contempt and scorn for

14. Lk 18.9–14.

those bent on seeking people's good opinion? You will find such people jeered on all sides for their attachment to empty praise. So what could be more wretched than ourselves, with our interest in spiritual things, if we, like them, are inclined to sigh for people's good opinion instead of being content with praise from God? As Paul says, "His praise comes not from people but from God."[15] Aren't you aware, dearly beloved, how at the races the horsemen are not diverted by the crowds present there, or the countless cries of encouragement, nor do they get satisfaction from the popular acclaim? Instead, they have eyes only for one person, the emperor, seated in the center, and, (54b) in expectation of his favor, they scorn the whole crowd, taking compliments to heart only when the emperor has awarded them the prize. In imitation of them, place no great store by people's regard, and don't let that motivate you to virtue; rather, await the verdict of the just Judge and look for his nod. In this way dispose your whole life so that in this world you may be constantly buoyed up by sound hopes and in the next may enjoy everlasting blessings. May this be the good fortune of us all, through the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for all ages of ages. Amen. (54c)

15. Rom 2.29.

HOMILY 6

"God said: 'Let lights be made in the firmament of heaven for lighting up the earth, to separate day from night; let them act as signs and indicate days, seasons and years.'"[1]

I WANT TO TAKE up the usual line of teaching, yet I hesitate and hang back: a cloud of despair has settled upon me, and has confused and upset my train of thought—not simply despair but anger as well. I'm not sure what I should do; uncertainty is paralyzing my brain. I mean, when I consider that at the merest suggestion from the devil you have put out of your mind all that unremitting teaching of ours and the daily exhortations, and have all rushed off to that diabolical concourse and been absorbed in horse racing, what sort of zest can I bring to the task of teaching you any more, when my former words have so lightly slipped away? (54d) What especially aggravates my despair and brings my anger to boiling point is the fact that despite all our exhortation you have put out of your mind the respect due to the holy season of Lent and have thus cast yourself into the devil's net. How could anyone, even with heart of stone, take that kind of rejection unmoved? I'm ashamed of you, believe me, I'm mortified to see the pointlessness of the trouble I've gone to, sowing seed among stones.

(2) Still, whether you heed my words or reject them, the reward coming to me will be unimpaired. After all, I did every-

1. Gn 1.14. Chrysostom's pastoral concern for his congregation, leading him generally to adopt a moral style of commentary (cf. Introduction 13, 16,17), causes him in this 'homily' to depart from his text to berate his congregation for their attendance at horse racing—an amusement that was not altogether innocent in the Antioch of those days. See R. Hill, "On giving up the horses for Lent," *CleR* 68 (March 1983) 105–106.

thing in my power: I went to some expense, I gave the proper warning; my concern now, which is exercising me somewhat, is that through these efforts I may be the cause of your being held to account more severely. Scripture says: "That servant who knew the will of his master and did not discharge it will be severely punished."[2] None of you, in other words, can make a plea of ignorance, with us day by day sounding off about the same things and showing up the devil's snares (55a) for what they are, as well as the great ease of virtuous living for any of us wanting to stay on the alert. Don't you know that people so unconcerned about their own salvation and vacillating between attention to it and headlong course into the devil's net are compared in Sacred Scripture to dogs? It says, remember, "The person who turns away from his sin and then goes back to it is like a dog returning to its vomit."[3] Do you see what it is they resemble who run off to that unlawful spectacle? Haven't you heard Christ's words: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them can be compared to a fool who built his house on sandy ground: rivers came and winds blew; they struck that house, it collapsed, and its collapse was terrible."[4] Those who have run off to the races (55b) have turned out worse than that. You see, that fellow's house suffered a collapse only under pressure; that is to say, Scripture made mention of rivers and winds to indicate to us, not the volume of water and the force of wind, but the severe onset of temptations; and its mention of the collapse of the house was not for us to think about a house that you can see. The story is really about the soul, which collapses under the pressure of anxiety it cannot sustain: in your case no gale blew nor rivers surged—simply a gentle breath from the devil came your way and overwhelmed you completely.

(3) What could be worse than this madness? What's the good of fasting, tell me? what's the use of coming along here? Who could fail to upbraid you and commiserate with us? To

2. Lk 12.47 somewhat abbreviated.
3. Cf. Prv 26.11.
4. Mt 7.26–27.

upbraid you, because everything you have amassed (55c) you've squandered in one fell swoop, opening the doors of your mind to the wicked demon to let him in and carry off all your spiritual wealth with the greatest of ease. Likewise to commiserate with us, because in this case we have been sounding off to heedless ears and wasting so much effort, sowing the seed day after day without possibility of getting any crop. After all, surely our purpose in putting effort into our sermons hasn't been simply to charm your ears or because we were interested in winning your praise? Unless you stood to gain something from the things we said, we would have done better in the long run to have said nothing. I mean, I have no wish to be the agent of your greater condemnation.

(4) A comparison can in fact be made with a merchant who assembles all his merchandise and fills his vessel with all his wealth, only to have a storm buffet it and through the force of the winds (55d) the ship sink with all hands, turning him into a piteous spectacle for all to see, appearing suddenly devoid of everything, reduced to utter indigence after all his incredible wealth—that is exactly the treatment the devil has meted out to you. I mean, finding your spiritual ship full of great wealth, and seeing your incredible treasure which you have been able to amass both from fasting and from the constant teaching, he exposed you to that useless and harmful horse race as though to a storm, and by means of that left you empty and bare of all your resources.

(5) I am aware that my rebuke is forthright; I beg your pardon for that—it is an index of the grief in my soul. These words of mine come not from hostility but from concern and heartfelt affection. So I am restraining my vehemence somewhat, having checked the spread of the cancer; (56a) my wish now, dear people, is to encourage sound hopes, lest you despair and give up the struggle. You see, in the case of the soul things don't happen in the way they do with the goods of the senses; I mean, in the latter instance it is impossible to restore the fortunes overnight of a person reduced to indigence from all that wealth, whereas in our case through God's loving kindness we can quickly return to our former prosperity, provided

only we are prepared to condemn what we have done in the past and here and now bridle our sloth. This, after all, is the kind of Lord we have, so liberal and generous; he shouts it out to us through the biblical author when he says, "I have no wish for the death of the sinner—only that he be converted and live."[5]

(6) I know that, being right-minded people, you recognize your faults. It is no small step on the way back to virtue to know the magnitude of your sins. (56b) By contrast, let no one insinuate once again that diabolical deceit in words like, "What's wrong, after all, with watching horses race?" Because, if you are really prepared to honestly study all that goes on there, you will find everything shot through with a satanic inspiration. I mean, it's not simply a matter of watching horses race, but listening to shouting and swearing and all sorts of improper speech, and watching whores parading around in the open and young fellows behaving in women's ways. Do these things strike you as having little influence for ensnaring your soul? After all, if even unforeseen circumstances make us lose our step and fall, and cast us into the very depths of disaster when we're not on the lookout, what is likely to happen to people who attend those places of set purpose, feasting their eyes on those forbidden sights and coming away utterly debauched? (56c) Our loving Lord, remember, who knows the threat to our nature and the devil's cunning and manifold wiles, has protected us from everything besetting us and wants to make us proof against the devil's snares; hence he has imposed this law in the words, "The man who looks on a woman with a view to lusting after her has already committed adultery in his heart,"[6] calling the gaze directed with curiosity consummated adultery.

(7) So don't say further to me: "What harm, after all, comes from passing the time there?" Because that single factor of a horse race is sufficient to cause the ruin of your soul. You see, whenever we waste precious time on worthless things, which, far from contributing anything to our soul, even harm it, and

5. Ez 18.23. 6. Mt 5.28.

when we squabble and pour out a flood of words good and bad, what excuse do we have? what account can we give? To draw a comparison: here in church if we tend to protract the instruction, (56d) many people become restive and impatient, and allege bodily distress and weariness, although this wonderful ceiling is sufficient to distract them from that;[7] there are no grounds for complaint in cold, or rain, or force of winds. There, on the contrary, where they are scourged by heavy rain and fierce wind storms, or at other times the sun sheds its burning rays, they are prepared to spend not an hour or two but most of the day; the aged have no respect for their own grey hair, while the young are not ashamed to patronize the haunts of the old; so great, however, is their self-deception that it is with relish that they embrace that bane of their soul, and no thought is given to the brevity and impermanence of the harmful pleasure, the eternity of the pain, and the accusation of conscience.

(8) Even now I see the countenances of some people, and I am wondering about their state of soul and how far repentance has touched them by now. But in case you lapse into the same fault again, (57a) and, despite all our exhortation, run back to those satanic gatherings, I must make my formal denunciation. You see, it is not always proper to apply mild remedies: instead, when the cancer responds slowly, one must apply those that are sharp and likely to sting, so that the cure may be faster. Accordingly, let all those open to these accusations learn that if they persist in their lax ways despite this further exhortation of ours, we will not keep patience; instead, we will invoke the laws of the Church and bring great vehemence to our teaching lest they stray in that direction again and give such a contemptuous hearing to the divine sayings. I'm not saying this in regard to everyone gathered here, but to

7. Certainly Chrysostom's homilies are quite long, and tend to get longer, so that he frequently alludes to the tedium experienced by his listeners and apologizes for their protracted length; he also refers disparagingly to the congregation's distraction—by the ceiling, in this case, and in a more celebrated instance (Sermon 4 on *Genesis*) by the lamplighter, who becomes an occasion for a beautiful parallel to the scriptural homilist (Introduction 12).

those guilty of the behavior I've mentioned. While our sermon reaches everybody without exception, if the cap fits wear it, and apply the appropriate remedy. Let guilty persons put away their sloth forthwith and proceed no further, (57b) but rather shake themselves up with utter earnestness and set about the correction of their faults. For their part, let the innocent listeners take more care against deception in case they ever become guilty.[8]

(9) However, dear people, to convince you that we have been led to say this out of a heartfelt grief arising from affection and concern and through grave fear for your salvation—come now, let us once more nourish ourselves on sound hopes by proposing to you the customary instruction, so as to demonstrate to you the fatherly regard we have for you. For your part, I beg you, attend to what is said with close attention so as to gain further good and thus return home. I feel the need, dear people, to repeat these words we have read before: "God said, 'Let lights be created in the firmament of heaven for lighting up the earth, (57c) so as to separate day from night; let them act as signs and indicate days, seasons and years. Let them provide light in the firmament of heaven, to shine upon the earth.' This is what happened." You see, since the blessed Moses taught us yesterday how the Creator of all beautified the shapelessness of the earth with vegetation, the variety of flowers and the growth of crops, today he switches his description to the arrangement of heaven. In other words, just as the earth was beautified by the things produced from it, in like manner he caused heaven, which was already visible, to be more conspicuous and bright by lending it the variety that comes from a range of stars and from the creation of the two huge lights, namely, the sun and the moon. "God made," the text goes on, "the two huge lights, the greater light for governing the day, and the lesser light for governing the night and the stars."[9]

8. Nowhere does Chrysostom become more labored in his admonition than here; so the 'sport of kings', especially in Lent, ranked high in his scale of misdemeanors.

9. Gn 1.16.

(10) Do you see the wisdom (57d) of the Creator? He merely spoke, and this marvellous body came into being, namely, the sun. You see, it calls this light great and says it was brought into existence for governing the day. In other words, the sun renders the day brighter, shedding its rays like flashing lights and day by day revealing its own beauty in full bloom: as soon as it appears at dawn, it awakes the whole human race to the discharge of their respective duties. This beauty the blessed author reveals when he says: "The sun beams, like a bridegroom emerging from his chamber, like a giant in the running of his course; its span extends from one corner of heaven right to the other corner of heaven."[10] Do you see how he revealed to us both the sun's beauty and its speed of movement? That is, in saying, "Its span extends from one corner of heaven (58a) right to the other corner of heaven," it indicated to us how in one moment of time it traverses the whole world and scatters its rays from end to end, making its great resources available: it not only supplies heat to the earth but also dries it up, and not only dries it up but enkindles it, and supplies us with many different resources, so marvellous a body is it, quite beyond one's power to describe adequately.

(11) I mention this to you and sing the praises of this heavenly body so that you may not stop short there, dearly beloved, but proceed further and transfer your admiration to the creator of the heavenly body. After all, the greater the sun is shown to be, so much the more marvellous is the revelation of the Creator.

(12) Pagan peoples, however, in their wonder and stupor at this heavenly body were unable to look beyond it to praise its creator; instead, they sang its praises (58b) and treated it as a deity. Hence the reason for the blessed Paul's saying, "They worshipped and served the creature instead of its creator."[11] What could be more stupid than people failing to recognize the creator from the creature and being caught up in such error as to put creature and artefact on the same level as their creator? So then, foreseeing the inclination of slothful people

10. Ps 19.5–6. 11. Rom 1.25.

to error, Sacred Scripture teaches us that the creation of this heavenly body took place three days later, after the growth of all the plants from the earth, after the earth's taking its own form, so that afterwards no one could say that without this force these things would not have been brought forth from the earth. Hence it shows you everything completed before the creation of this body lest you attribute the production of the crops to it instead of to the Creator of all things, the one who said from the beginning, (58c) "Let the earth bring forth a crop of vegetation."

(13) But if they were to say that the sun's virtue also contributes to the ripening of the crops, I would not gainsay them. After all, it's similar to the case of the farmer: in saying he contributes to the processes of the soil, I don't ascribe everything to him: even if thousands of farmers did their best, their efforts would be fruitless unless the One initiating the process through his own design from the beginning willed to put in train the very creation of the crops. In exactly the same way, I say, even if after the farmer's work there is assistance from the work of the sun, and the moon and the mildness of the climate, this would likewise be to no effect unless the hand from above did not play its part; once, however, this mighty hand is ready, the work of the elements makes its most efficacious contribution.

(14) Give close attention to this so as to bridle those still intent on deceiving themselves, and have nothing to do with assigning to creatures the honor due to the Creator. (58d) Accordingly, Sacred Scripture not only shows us the sun's beauty, and immensity and usefulness in the words, "It beams like a bridegroom, like a giant in running its course," but also its limitations and powerlessness: listen to what it says elsewhere, "What could provide more light than the sun? Yet even it fails."[12] Don't be deceived by appearances, it tells us: unless the Creator willed so to direct, it would disappear as though it had never existed. If pagan peoples had understood this, they

12. Sir 17.31.

would not have fallen victim to such deception, but would properly have seen that from contemplation of created things one should move on to the Creator. Accordingly, he created it on the fourth day lest you think it is the cause of the day. In other words, what we said about the plants we will say also about the day, namely, that three days occurred before the creation of the sun. The Lord wanted to make daylight more brilliant by means of this heavenly body also—(59a) something we would say is true in the case of the lesser light as well, by which I mean the moon; after all, three nights occurred before its creation. Still, once created, the moon makes its own contribution, banishing the gloom of the night and accomplishing (you could almost say) the same things the sun does in other respects.

(15) I mean, the sun was designed "for governing the day," the moon "for governing the night." What is meant by "for governing the day" and "for governing the night"? The text implies the sun took control of the day and the moon of the night, so that the sun should render the day brighter with its rays, and the moon should dissipate the gloom and with its light provide the human race with the possibility of discharging their duties. I mean, by this arrangement the traveller travels the path in confidence, the sailor steers the boat and navigates the seas, and everyone conducting personal affairs can without any concern follow the dictates of individual intuition.

(16) Then, after teaching us (59b) the usefulness of these lights, the text goes on: "And the stars: God placed them in the firmament of heaven to shine on the earth for governing the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness."[13] Notice how he made clear to us their usefulness also: "He placed them in the firmament of heaven," it says. What is the meaning of, "He placed"? As though to say "He fixed"? By no means; after all, we often see them traverse a mighty span in the twinkling of an eye, never standing still in one

13. Gn 1.17–18.

place but following their own course which they have been directed to run by the Lord. So what does "He placed" mean? It is equivalent to saying he directed them to be in heaven. You can, in fact, see Scripture leading up to this when it says elsewhere, "He placed Adam in paradise,"[14] not because he had fixed him in paradise (59c) but because he directed him to be in paradise. By the same token, about the stars we would say that he directed them to be in the firmament of heaven and shed their light on the earth. I mean, dearly beloved, consider this: would it not be more pleasing to see heaven studded with stars at midnight than any number of fields and gardens, the sky adorned with a range of stars as though with flowers, and the stars themselves shedding light on the earth? This, after all, is what they were designed for, shining on the earth and governing the day and the night, which is generally true of the great lights also. Remember, when it taught us the creation of the two lights and the stars, it used these words in common about them all: "For governing the day and the night, and separating the light from the darkness." You see, just as you can't spy the stars moving in the sky during the day (59d) (the sun, of course, concealing their strength with its great brilliance), so too during the night the sun would never be visible, since the moon is sufficient with its light to dispel the gloom of night; each of the heavenly bodies keeps to its own boundaries and never oversteps its due measure, but rather maintains the Lord's design and fulfils its proper purpose.

(17) Who could tell all the other advantages conferred on the human race through the usefulness of these lights and the stars? The text says, remember, "'Let them act as signs, and indicate days, seasons and years.'" What is meant by 'act as signs, and indicate days, seasons and years'? Sacred Scripture wants to teach us that the movement of these bodies conveys to us the knowledge of times, the changing of solstices, the number of the days, and the course of the year, and from these facts we can fathom (60a) everything. The navigator, for

14. A paraphrase of Gn 2.8.

example, with his eyes on the path of these bodies, gazing intently at the sky and studying all these signs carefully, is thus able to hold his course and cross the sea; though the night is often black, he can steer by the sight of the stars, and through his own skill bring safety to his company. The farmer, too, knows how to learn from these signs when he must sow the seed, till the soil, do the ploughing, and when sharpen the sickle and set about harvesting the crops. Not a few aids for our daily living are contributed to us by the knowledge of times, the number of the days, and the cycle of the year; (60b) and you would find many advantages for human existence stemming from these created things, which it would be impossible to enumerate fully in a precise manner. Hence the need to learn from these few details how to estimate the usefulness of the heavenly bodies, to marvel at their creation and adore and praise their Creator, to be aghast at his ineffable love shown to human beings; for humanity alone and for no other reason did he create everything, intending a little later to place them like some king or ruler over other things created by him.

(18) The text goes on: "God saw that it was good." Do you see how each day Sacred Scripture shows him satisfied with his creatures so as to undercut a pretext of people daring to find fault with the things created by him? (60c) I mean, for the reason that Sacred Scripture with this purpose in mind registers the same point in every case, it becomes clear by dint of repetition. After all, it would have been enough following all the acts of creation to say once that everything he had made was very good; but knowing the extent of the limitations of our reasoning, he repeats the process each time, to teach us that everything was created with a certain inventive wisdom and ineffable love.[15]

15. Again Chrysostom's theology of the Word leads him to relate the *precision* of the text (in this case, repetition of detail) to human *limitations*, taken account of in divine *considerateness*, itself a mark of *love*. It is a beautiful synthesis, underlying Chrysostom's whole approach to Scripture. See R. Hill, "On looking again at *synkatabasis*," *Prudentia* 13 (1981) 3–11.

(19) "Evening came," the text goes on, "and morning came: a fourth day."[16] In other words, when he had completed the arrangement of heaven, beautifying it with the stars and creating those two great lights, he brought the day to a close: "Evening came, and morning: a fourth day," says Scripture. Notice how it speaks in this way in the case of each day, wanting to rivet the sacred truths in our mind by the repetition in the teaching.

(20) Accordingly, let us carve these truths (60d) across our heart and hold fast to them, let us shake off all sloth, let us cling carefully to these salutary truths and with all forbearance instruct people ensnared in pagan error not to confuse this order by deserting the Creator to worship the creatures that have been created for our welfare and utility. I mean, even if pagans shout and scream a thousand times, I will proclaim it from the housetops that all these things were created for the human race, since the Creator is sufficient of himself and needed none of them; instead, it was to show his love for us that he created them all, demonstrating the great regard he has for the human race, and it was for us to move from these creatures to bring to him a proper adoration.

(21) After all, how great would be the folly of stumbling over the beauty of these creatures and (61a) remaining at their level, instead of raising the eyes of our minds to their Creator and believing the words of blessed Paul: "From the creation of the world what is invisible to our eyes in God has through created things become perceptible to our understanding."[17] What do you mean, O human being? Do you see the sky and marvel at its beauty, at the variety of the stars, at their utter brilliance? Don't stop there, but lead your mind on to their Creator. Again, the sun's light astonishes you, and the sight of the great usefulness it has stirs you to amazement, and when you see its rays shining on your eyes, you marvel at the beauty of this heavenly body. But don't stop there, either: consider instead that if the creature is so wonderful and incredible, surpassing all human understanding, what on earth

16. Gn 1.19. 17. Rom 1.20.

can he be like who creates this merely by a word of command? (61b) Consider the very same in the case of the earth too: when you see the earth adorned with flowers like some multicolored garment, the foliage of plants enveloping it all over, don't think this is due spontaneously to the earth's power, or to the energy of the sun, or the moon; realize instead, as wisdom suggests, that for the creation of these things he simply spoke the word, "'Let the earth put forth a crop of vegetation,'" and forthwith the whole face of the earth was brilliant color.

(22) If we daily turn these thoughts over in our minds, we will both be right-minded ourselves and also refer to the Lord the praise that is (if not adequate) at least all our abilities can manage. Let us praise him not simply for that reason, but also by means of a life lived in the best way possible—by resisting the temptation to relapse into past sins, by bidding (61c) farewell to those diabolical errors, by learning from the past and showing great zeal, and thus by earnest confession winning favor from above. You see, in his great love for us he finds it sufficient that we desist from evil; if we make this decision, we will readily come to the practice of good deeds. Let me no longer catch sight of any of you attending race courses, I beg you, nor spending the best part of the day in unsavory gatherings; and don't give your time to dice throwing and the shouting generated by it and the ensuing brawls. I mean, what's the good of fasting if, on the one hand, you pass the day without food and, on the other, you abandon yourself to the dice and to brainless nonsense, and often waste the whole day in swearing and blaspheming? Don't, I beg you, let us be so slothful as to neglect our salvation; instead, let our conversation be constantly on spiritual topics; (61d) a divine book in our hands, let each of us invite our neighbors to join us and refresh our minds and theirs with the divine words,[18] so that in this way we

18. We noted above (Homily 2, note 13) the roots in Chrysostom's theology of Vatican II's notion of the domestic Church; that Council's teaching on the extent of inspiration, whereby the reader enjoys the same Spirit as the scriptural composer (*Dei Verbum* 12), is suggested here in Chrysostom's recommendation of home Bible groups, as elsewhere in the homilies. (Cf. Introduction 11)

may be able to escape the snares of the evil one, reap great benefits from our fasting, and enjoy the love of God, the grace and mercy of his only-begotten Son, to whom with the Father and the Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 7

"God said: 'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls, and on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven.' This is what happened. God made the huge sea monsters, and every single living reptile of various kinds produced by the waters."[1]

YESTERDAY WE sufficiently upbraided those who deserted us for the horse racing. We showed them how great was the harm they suffered, and how in one fell swoop they had squandered the spiritual riches accruing to them from fasting, and (62a) how from great wealth they had at one stroke cast themselves into utter indigence. Come now, then, today let us make use of a milder remedy, and bind up the wounds of their souls just as if they were our own limbs, because even yesterday when we applied harsher remedies, it was not simply to cause them pain and aggravate their suffering, but rather that we might be able to reach the cancer by drastic measures. After all, this is what is done by doctors and parents: the former initially apply the more potent medications, and when they break open the ulcer, then they call into play remedies more likely to relieve the pain; and when parents see their children kicking over the traces, they first administer rebuke of a severer type, and afterwards admonition and encouragement. We too will follow the same procedure: if yesterday we used our words with severity, (62b) today on the contrary we will phrase our speech in a milder fashion, and show the same care as for our own limbs. You see, your progress encourages in us greater confidence, and this is a source of spiritual riches for us—to see you devoting yourselves to spiritual interests, being distinguished for virtue and

1. Gn 1.20–21.

shunning risk of harm. So by the same token, when we see you stumbling and ensnared in the deceits of the devil, we are filled with disappointment, and a certain shame, so to say, spreads over our soul. The blessed Paul says, remember, "This is what keeps us alive, to see you standing firm in the Lord."[2]

(2) So as mature people filled with understanding, forget what lies behind and press on to what is ahead; renew the covenant you have made with Christ, (62c) keep it firm for the future, and with sober reasoning shut off every entrance to the devil's wiles. Use every endeavor at this late stage to expunge the stigma of sloth attached to you, affected as you are by this demeaning and harmful habit; ponder the fact that not only is this habit bad enough in bringing great harm to those who attend those places, but they become cause of scandal to many others. I mean, when pagans and Jews see the person who daily frequents the church and is a beneficiary of constant teaching all of a sudden turning up there, how can they fail to conclude that what we do is a fraud, and entertain the same suspicion about everything to do with us? Don't you hear the blessed Paul counselling us in strident tones and urging us, "Give no scandal"[3]? (62d) Then, lest you think his warning is given only in regard to his own community, he continued, "to either Jews or Gentiles," and then added, "or to the Church of God." You see, nothing so harms and damages our religion as much as scandal given to unbelievers. So when they see amongst us people who are conspicuous for virtue and who display a disregard for things of this life, some of them are enraged by it but others are often overwhelmed with wonder at the fact that, while having the same human nature as theirs, they do not share the same values. Of course, when they see someone affected by a slight degree of indifference, at once they turn their tongue against us all without exception, and from one person's indifference condemn the whole community of Christians alike. Nor do they stop there: at once they direct their words against the head of the community, because of the negligence of the members, (63a) and do

2. 1 Thes 3.8. 3. 1 Cor 10.32.

not refrain from blaspheming against the Lord of them all. They think the indifference of these Christians masks the very errors to which they themselves are subject.

(3) For proof that this brings greatest risk to those who provide others with an occasion of blasphemy, let us listen to the prophet's cry when he speaks as God's mouthpiece: "Alas for you: it is your fault that my name is blasphemed amongst the Gentiles."[4] That's a fearful statement, fraught with terror. That is to say, "Alas" is like the cry of someone lamenting the fate of people heading for that inescapable punishment. In other words, just as this kind of retribution awaits those who through their own indifference bear the responsibility for blasphemy, likewise, on the other hand, there are grounds for awarding a thousand laurels to those who show a care for virtue. This is the very lesson Christ gave us in saying, "Let your light shine in people's presence so that they may see your good works (63b) and praise your Father in heaven."[5] That is, just as people are scandalized by the indifference of some of us and direct the edge of their tongue against our Lord, so [Christ is saying] when you practice virtue and people see you, they do not stop at praise of you; instead, when they see your good deeds shining and lighting up your face, they are moved to praise of your Father in heaven. When this happens in their case, we in our turn are amply rewarded, and over and above their praise the Lord bestows on us countless good things: "Those giving glory to me I myself will glorify,"[6] he says.

(4) Accordingly, dearly beloved, let us do everything for the purpose of giving glory to our Lord, and let us not be an occasion of scandal to anybody. This, after all, is the unfailing lesson given us by the whole world's teacher, blessed Paul, (63c) as for example when he says, "If food is a source of scandal to my brother, let me never till the end of time touch meat again;" and again, "By sinning against your brothers in this way through bruising your tender conscience, you sin against Christ."[7] A stern admonition that, entailing a heavy condem-

4. Is 52.5.
5. Mt 5.16.
6. 1 Sm 2.30.
7. 1 Cor 8.12–13, with the order reversed.

nation. In other words, he is saying, don't think the harm will be inflicted solely on one person: it passes on to Christ himself, who for that person was crucified. So if the Lord was not swayed from being crucified for him, would you not make every effort to avoid giving him any occasion for scandal? You will find Paul giving this advice everywhere to his disciples; it is, after all, the factor that keeps our life together. Hence he uses these words in writing in another letter: "Let each of you consider not your own concerns but the concerns of others;"[8] and again in another place: (63d) "Everything is lawful for me, but not everything edifies others."[9] Do you see the apostolic attitude? Even if it is lawful for me to behave in a certain way, he is saying, without fear of repercussion for myself on that account, yet to avoid interfering with my neighbor's spiritual progress I would not presume to behave like that. Do you see the soul full of loving concern—how he has no eye at all for his own interests, but shows us in every way that the greatest virtue consists in taking great care for our neighbor's spiritual progress.

(5) Recognizing all this, let us be on our guard, I beg you, and steer clear of the things able to undermine the wealth of our virtue, and let us do nothing likely to bring harm to our neighbor. This, after all, adds a further dimension to our sin, and brings upon us severer punishment. Let us not look down on an ordinary person and utter those chilling words, "What concern is it of mine if such a person is scandalized?" What are you saying, tell (64a) me? What concern is it of yours? Christ charged you to so let your light shine that not only would you excite the wonder of the onlookers, but your Lord would be praised—whereas you regard it of no account to be doing the opposite and being responsible for blasphemy instead of praise directed to him? Where in this attitude is there a trace of a circumspect soul carefully respecting the laws of God?

(6) If, however, there is someone who used to speak in quite the same manner as that under the influence of habit, now, I

8. Phil 2.4. 9. 1 Cor 10.23.

beg you, let him accept this advice and desist from those improper remarks; let him show such zeal in all his actions as never to fall under the condemnation of that unsleeping eye, nor be reproached by his own conscience, nor provoke the blasphemy of the Lord from those who observe him. (64b) You see, if we manage our affairs with such caution, we shall enjoy great love on the Lord's part and dispel as well the wiles of the devil. After all, when he sees us living soberly and watchfully, the devil will think he is facing a useless task and will take himself from our sight.

(7) But so much by way of introduction.[10] Come now, let us spread a spiritual table before you by laying out before you, dear people, what has been read, and let us see if we can learn what it is today, too, the blessed Moses wants to teach us—or rather the Holy Spirit through his tongue. So what does the text say? "God said, 'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls, and on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven.' This is what happened." See the Lord's loving kindness, how by a certain order and sequence he teaches us about every created thing. (64c) First he taught us how at his command he awakened the earth to produce fruits; then he taught us about the creation of the two lights; he added also the range of stars, through which the beauty of heaven was made more brilliant.

(8) Today finally he switches to the waters and shows us from them living beings coming at his word and command. The text says, remember, "'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls, and on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven.'" What words, tell us, can do justice to that marvel? What tongue can measure up to the praise of the Creator? He simply said, "'Let the earth put forth,'" and immediately he awakened it to birth pangs; now he says, "'Let the waters produce.'" See how his directions correspond: in one case, the text says, "'Let it put forth,'" in

10. By this stage Chrysostom's congregation would have been wondering if they were going to be given a commentary on the Gn verses read at the outset—such was the length to which Chrysostom's introduction extended. Cf. Introduction 11.

this case, "'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls.'" (64d) You see, just as in the case of the earth he simply said, "'Let it put forth,'" and there appeared a wide-ranging variety of flowers and plants and seeds, all created by one word, so too in this case he said, "'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls,'" and there were created on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven (and all of a sudden such kinds of reptiles and such variety of birds as to beggar counting.)

(9) While it was one word, and a short one, the kinds of living things were many and varied. But don't be astonished, dearly beloved; after all, it was God's word, and his word endowed those creatures with life. Do you see how he brings everything from non-being to being? Did you see the precision of the teaching? Did you see the considerateness of the Lord, and how far he demonstrates it in regard to our human race? I mean, how would we have been able to know these things precisely had not he in his really unspeakable love deemed it proper (65a) to teach humanity through the tongue of the biblical author, so that we might know the order of created things and the power of the Creator, and how his word took effect, and his utterance endowed creatures with life and the way to existence?

(10) Yet there are some stupid people who, despite this kind of teaching, are rash enough to withhold belief, and do not admit that these visible things have a creator. Some of them hold they came into existence by themselves, others that they were formed from some underlying matter. See the extent of the devil's wiles, how he exploits the facile thinking of people in the thrall of error. For that reason the blessed Moses, inspired by the divine Spirit, teaches us with great precision, lest we fall victim to the same things as they, instead of being able to know clearly (65b) both the sequence of created things and how each thing was created. You see, if God in his care for our salvation[11] had not directed the tongue of the biblical author

11. This passage is another conspicuous instance of the synthesis of Chrysostom's basic principles on Scripture—inspiration, love, considerateness, precision—and all "for our salvation," as he repeats over and over again.

in this way, it would have been sufficient to say that God made heaven and earth, the sea and living things, and not add the order of the days, nor what was created first and what later. But, lest he leave any grounds for excuse to those bent on folly, he explains in this way both the order of created things and the number of the days, and he teaches us everything with great considerateness so that we may learn the whole truth and not turn our minds to the error of those uttering all these ideas from their own reasoning. But we are able to know the ineffable power of our creator.

(11) "This is what happened," the text says. He said: "'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls, (65c) and on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven,'" and the elements obeyed, and carried out what was commanded. "It happened," the text goes on, "just as the Lord commanded. God made the huge sea monsters and every single living reptile which the waters produced in a range of kinds, and every winged creature according to kind. God saw that they were good, and God blessed them in these words: 'Increase and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.'"[12] Notice here again, I ask you, the extent of the Spirit's wisdom. I mean, the blessed Moses, after saying, "This is what happened," teaches us by adding one detail at a time in the words, "God made the huge sea monsters, and every single living reptile which the waters produced in a range of kinds, and every winged creature according to kind. God saw that they were good." (65d) Here once more he takes the ground from under those rash enough to speak always heedlessly. That is, lest anyone be able to say, Why did he make the sea monsters? What good are they to us? What is the advantage of their creation? Of set purpose he first said, "God made the huge sea monsters, and every single living reptile, and the birds," and immediately added, "God saw that they were good." In other words, he is saying, although you stand in ignorance of the reason for the created things, don't presume to find fault with their creation. Having

12. Gn 1.20–22.

heard the Lord give his approval and declare them good, how can you be so demented as to dare to ask, Why were they made? Are you scorning their creation as pointless? I mean, if you were well disposed you would be able from the creation of these things to get an insight into the power of your Lord and his ineffable love—his power, for the reason that he caused living beings like this to be created from the waters by his word and command, and his love, for the reason that in creating them he gave each of them a particular place, and (66a) assigned them a boundless area of the sea so that they might not hinder one another but dwell in the waters and provide an example to teach us the Creator's extraordinary power and cause no harm to the human race.

(12) Do you think that it is an insignificant mark of love that a twofold benefit comes to you from these creatures? They do, after all, lead those of us willing to think aright, to the knowledge of God and cause us to be amazed at the greatness of his loving kindness in freeing the human race from the harm brought on itself. You see, it was not simply for our use that everything was created by him, but on account of his great prodigality: while some things were created for our use, others had this purpose—that the power of their Creator might be proclaimed. (66b) So, when you hear that "God saw that it was good," presume no longer to contradict Sacred Scripture, nor bury your head in idle speculation with questions why this or that was made. "God blessed them," the text says, "and said, 'Increase and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.'" This is the blessing, that they should grow to a great number. You see, since the creatures he made had life in them, he wanted their life to be lasting. Hence the text added: "God blessed them and said, 'Increase and multiply.'" That word, you know, influences them right up to the present, and has spanned such an extent of time (66c) without one of those species being diminished.[13] After all, God's blessing and the form of

13. It is not surprising, all things considered, if Chrysostom strikes us at times in his commentary as uncritical, even fundamentalist. We have, how-

words, "'Increase and multiply,'" bestowed on them life and permanence.

(13) "Evening came and morning came: a fifth day."[14] Do you see how Sacred Scripture taught us also the living things created on the fifth day? Well, just wait a while and you will see once again the loving kindness of your Lord. I mean, he not merely quickened the waters to birth of living things, but also directed land creatures in their turn to be produced from the earth. In other words, today it is hardly inappropriate to arrive at the things made on the sixth day as well. The text says: "God said: 'Let the earth bring forth living things in their various kinds, four-footed creatures, reptiles, wild beasts on the earth, (66d) cattle and all the reptiles of the earth in their various kinds.'"[15] And it was so done. See the earth also for a second time producing twofold fruit, and doing the Lord's bidding. On the first occasion, remember, it brought forth a crop of seeds, but on this occasion living beings, four-footed creatures, reptiles, wild beasts and cattle. Notice that this instance demonstrates what I told you in advance, that it wasn't simply for our use that he produced all these things; instead, it was also for our benefit[16] in the sense that we might see the overflowing abundance of his creatures and be overwhelmed at the Creator's power, and be in a position to know that all these things were produced by a certain wisdom and ineffable love out of regard for the human being that was destined to come into being.

(14) (67a) "God made the wild beasts of the earth in their various kinds," the text says, "cattle in their various kinds, and all the reptiles in their various kinds. God saw that they were good."[17] Where now are those people rash enough to ask,

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ever, commented above on his tendency to rationalize when in doubt, and like preachers the world over he is not inclined to underplay a point.

14. Gn 1.23.

15. Gn 1.24, Chrysostom's text being lengthier than both LXX and Heb., themselves not in agreement.

16. The distinction being made here between "use" (*chreia*) and "benefit" (*ōpheleia*) seems delicate yet meaningful—despite editors' attempts to alter the text.

17. Gn 1.25.

What's the point of wild beasts? of reptiles? Let them listen to the words of Sacred Scripture: "God saw that they were good." Tell me, the Creator himself commends the created things, and do you dare to call them in question? Would this attitude stop short at any madness? Admittedly, in the case of the seeds and the plants the earth has produced not only fruitbearing trees but also those giving no fruit, and brings forth not only crops that are profitless but also some that are strange to us and ones that are in many cases harmful. But no one will presume to find fault with their creation on that account; after all, they have not been produced without rhyme or reason. I mean, they would not have received commendation from the Lord (67b) had they not been created to serve some need. So the comparison is clear: in the case of the trees not all are fruitbearing; many bear no fruit and yet even they provide no less a remarkable service to us and contribute to our well-being; we make our houses from them and gain many other advantages contributing to our well-being. So, by and large, there is nothing which has been created without some reason, even if human nature is incapable of knowing precisely the reason for them all.

(15) In like manner, therefore, as with the trees, so too with the wild beasts: some are useful for our food, others for serving us. The species of wild beasts and reptiles, too, are of no little help to us, and if somebody is prepared to study them in a right mind, he will find even now, when control over them has been wrested from us owing to the disobedience of the first human creature, (67c) that the benefit is great that comes to us from them. I mean, physicians get from them many things which they employ as medications capable of promoting the health of our bodies. Otherwise, what great harm would have come from the creation of the wild beasts at a time when they, like domestic animals, were intended to come under the control of the creature soon to be created. In fact, it is time I spoke about this.

(16) Now, with a view to your learning the surpassing love of the Lord of all displayed in regard to our human race, consider the way he stretched out heaven, unfolded the earth,

created the firmament like a dividing wall making a separation in the waters, then directed the joining of the waters to happen, called one part seas and the dry part earth, next he beautified the latter with the proliferation of seeds (67d) and later with crops. Further, he went on to the creation of the two great lights and the variety of stars through which he added to the beauty of heaven. Then he produced from the waters the living beings and on the earth winged creatures flying across the firmament of heaven; and after completing the number of five days, since it was necessary for living beings to be created from the earth, he directed these to be brought forth, some suitable for food, others useful for our service, as well as wild beasts and reptiles. Then finally, after arranging everything in order, by imposing an appropriate order and design on all visible things, preparing a lavish table filled with rich and varied viands, laden with wealth and abundance, and making what might be called kingdoms above (68a) and below, conspicuous from all points and gleaming with variety—then finally he creates the being meant to enjoy all these things, giving this creature power over all these visible things. And as a demonstration of the degree to which this creature about to be fashioned is more elevated than all the other creatures, he bids everything he has made come under this creature's authority and supervision.

(17) Lest, however, we draw out the sermon to a great length, let us be content with what we have said and postpone to the next occasion what has to do with the fashioning of this wonderful being graced with reason and spirit—I mean, the human being. Now we will address to you the customary exhortation[18] so as to preserve the remembrance of the things said, and also, through all the things seen, to stir ourselves to praise of the Lord. The fact that we do not attain this, nor manage to grasp the meaning of created things, (68b) should not become for us grounds for unbelief but rather an occasion of praise. You see, when reasoning fails and the intellect

18. The style of the homily's conclusion is as perfunctory as its introduction—predictably so, quite obviously, for Chrysostom's congregation.

proves inadequate, call to your mind the greatness of the Lord, especially from the fact that his power is such that we fail to understand precisely the meaning of the things made by him. This is the attitude of sensible minds and sober hearts.

(18) When the pagans in this regard fell into error by entrusting everything to their own reasoning and refusing to acknowledge the limitations of their own nature, they let their imagination run riot, exceeded the measure of their own capabilities, and lost the sense of the status they could lay claim to. In other words, though they were elevated by the gift of reason and received such a pre-eminence from the Lord, outranking all other visible creatures in esteem, these people were cast into such stupidity as (68c) to worship dogs, monkeys, crocodiles and lowlier animals than these. Why mention brute beasts? Many of them fell into such folly and stupidity as to worship even onions and more worthless things than that. Hence the biblical author had these people in mind when he said: "He was likened to the brute beasts and resembled them."[19] The one who was dignified with the gift of reason, it means, and endowed with such great wisdom has become like the brutes, and even worse. That is to say, those beasts, being without the gift of reason, are not liable to punishment, whereas the creature dignified with reason and yet taking on their condition of irrationality will properly incur heavy penalties for being ungrateful for such liberality. Following this extreme they went on to call sticks and stones gods, and divinized all the visible elements; once, you see, they strayed from the right path, (68d) they fell headlong and were cast into the very depths of wickedness.

(19) Let us, however, not give up hope of their salvation; on the contrary, let us bring to the fore what we have to offer and converse with them in a spirit of great zeal and long-suffering, showing them also the absurdity of their behavior and the enormity of its harmfulness. Let us never despair of their sal-

19. Ps 49.20 in the version of the LXX, different from and lengthier than the Heb.

vation. In fact, it is likely that with the passage of time they will be convinced, especially if we live in such a way as to offer them no scandal. I mean, when many of them see some of our associates, who bear the name of Christian and lay claim to it, playing the robber like themselves, being guilty of avarice and envy, plotting and scheming, committing all sorts of crimes, victims of luxury and gluttony, no longer do they heed the advice from our lips: they consider all we have to offer is deception, (69a) and that everyone is guilty of the same faults. So think carefully, I beg you, of the severity of the punishments such people have become liable to in not only heaping burning coals on their own heads but also being responsible for the fact that others are stuck fast in error and block their ears to instruction in virtue, as well as putting in the devil's way people in quest of virtue, and—what is worse than everything—being responsible for blasphemy against the Lord by these people. Do you see the extent of the harm caused by this evil? Do you see how people render themselves liable not to normal punishment but to extreme severity, especially as they are fated to bear the guilt of all, not only for their own damnation, but for the scandal caused to those in error, the condemnation of people bent on virtue, and the blasphemies directed against God?

(20) So then, let us keep all this in mind and not neglect (69b) our own salvation; let us give careful attention to living a life of God's wanting, in the knowledge that on the basis of this most of all will we be either condemned or judged worthy of loving kindness at his hands. Accordingly, let us so perform every action as to pass our lives with a good conscience and lead towards the truth by means of our godly life-style those people still in error. Then all the others associated with us may because of us enjoy a good name, our Lord may be glorified above all and may take closer care of us. You see, when, at the sight of us, people are edified and give praise to God, we enjoy greater favor in his sight. After all, what could be more blessed than the person who lives in such a fashion that all who witness it are amazed and declare, (69c) "Glory to you, O God! what marvellous people Christians are! what wonderful

philosophy they give evidence of! how low their esteem for the things of this world! how insubstantial all things are considered to be by them—like shadows and dreams—and how little attached they are to anything in this visible world, treating everything like people living in exile, longing each day for release from this world!" What great recompense do you think these words bring to people living in this fashion, even here and now from God? Actually, the really remarkable thing is that even those who have this opinion of us will desist from their error and come back to the truth. It is quite clear how much encouragement this provides for the kind of people in that situation.

(21) Accordingly, knowing as we do that we are responsible both for the salvation of our neighbors and their loss, let us so regulate our life as not only to be sufficient for ourselves (69d) but also to prove an occasion of instruction to others, so that we may draw down on us here and now favor from God, and may in the future enjoy God's loving kindness in generous measure, thanks to the grace and mercy of his only-begotten Son, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 8

"God said: 'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness. Let them have control of the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven, the cattle and the wild beasts, all the earth and all the reptiles creeping upon the earth.'"[1]

COME NOW. Yesterday you listened with great enthusiasm to the words we had for you. So today, too, let us propose for your consideration (70a), my dear people, the text just read, first exhorting you to attend carefully to what is said, and to place within the recesses of your mind what was said before, lest we go to all this trouble idly and to no purpose. This, after all, is the object of our earnest effort, that you would know precisely the power of the Scriptures so as not merely to understand them yourselves but also to become teachers of them to others, and so be in a position, according to blessed Paul, to edify one another.[2] I mean, if you advance in the Lord, and manifest some progress in the teaching of spiritual things, you will also bring great joy to our hearts. For us, you see, this is complete success and the height of festivity. Scripture says, remember: "What is our hope, our joy, the crown of our boasting? Is it not yourselves"[3] and your progress in God's eyes?

(2) Every teacher, on seeing the disciples taking care to rivet in their mind the memory of the earliest lessons and (70b) showing something for it in practice, more readily entrusts them with the knowledge of the following lessons. Just so in our case: the more we see your minds stimulated, your interest on the increase, and your reasoning taking flight, the more

1. Gn 1.26, Chrysostom's text including the wild beasts, not found in other LXX texts.

2. Cf. 1 Thes 5.11.

3. 1 Thes 2.19.

do we wax enthusiastic for lavishing upon you more generous instruction. That is to say, the more we pour upon you these spiritual streams, the greater the influx upon us for the sake of your edification, for the salvation of your soul. You see, in this case things don't happen the way they do with money. In that case, you know, the man paying money to his neighbor reduces his own wealth: the more he pays, the more his fortune diminishes. It is quite the opposite with spiritual things: here our resources grow greater, the extent of this spiritual wealth is expanded when (70c) we lavishly pour out the flood of our teaching to those anxious to draw from it.

(3) Since, therefore, this exercise proves an occasion of greater wealth and abundance for us, and you are insatiable in regard to this spiritual nourishment, come now, let us see what it is today also blessed Moses is teaching us through the text we've read, or rather what the grace of the Spirit has to say to us all through his tongue. "God said," the text goes on, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'" Let us not rush idly by what is said, dearly beloved; instead, let us investigate each expression, get right to the depth of its meaning, and divine the force concealed in these brief phrases. I mean, although the words may be few, immense is the treasure concealed in them; we must remain alert and vigilant and not stop short at the surface. Likewise with people endeavoring to dig up this material treasure:[4] they don't simply (70d) dig around on the ground or study the surface; instead, they go right to the bottom and penetrate to the bowels of the earth, and thus separate the gold from the soil through their own skill, and despite much toil and sweat manage to find just a few nuggets. In our case it is nothing like that: the effort is small, the yield beyond telling. Such, you see, are all spiritual realities.

(4) Accordingly, let us not be found wanting by comparison with those who get excited about material things; let us in our turn search diligently for this spiritual treasure stored up in

4. One of Chrysostom's most frequently employed figures for the salutary effect of the inspired Word, as was mentioned above (Homily 3, note 3).

these words. Let us see first what is the new and surprising element in the words, and why the blessed author employed such a novel turn of phrase—or rather the loving God through the speech of the author. The text says: "'Let us make a human being (71a) in our image and likeness.'" A little time before, remember, we heard him saying, after the creation of heaven and earth, "'Let light be made'" and "'Let a firmament be made in the middle of the water;'" and again, "'Let the water be gathered together into one mass, and let the dry land appear,'" and "'Let lights be made,'" and "'Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls.'" Did you see the whole of creation made in those five days merely by word and command? Notice today how great the difference in the words. That is, no longer does it say, Let a human being be created. Instead, what? "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'" What is new in this? What is strange? Who on earth is this creature now being made whose making required in the Creator such planning and care? Don't be surprised, dearly beloved. I mean, (71b) the human being is the creature more important than all the other visible beings, and for this creature all the others have been produced—sky, earth, sea, sun, moon, stars, the reptiles, the cattle, all the brute beasts.

(5) Why is it, you ask, that if this creature is more important than all these, it is brought forth after them? A good question. Let me draw a comparison with a king on the point of entering a city on a visit: his bodyguard has to be sent on ahead to have the palace in readiness, and thus the king may enter his palace. Well now, in just the same way in this case the Creator, as though on the point of installing some king and ruler over everything on earth, first erected the whole of this scenery, and then brought forth the one destined to preside over it, showing us through the created things themselves what importance he gave to this creature.

(6) But let us put a question to a Jew, and see what he says to that (71c) verse, "'Let us make a human being in our image.'" The words, after all, are from Moses, whom they claim to believe, but in fact do not believe. As Christ says, "'If you be-

lieved Moses, you would believe me.'"[5] While, however, the words remain with them, their true meaning remains with us.[6] So to whom is the phrase addressed, "'Let us make a human being,'" and to whom does the Lord propose this plan? Not because he has need of plan and consideration—perish the thought; instead, he intends through the pretext of words to indicate the surpassing importance which he demonstrates in regard to the human creature. What then do they say, these people who still have a veil lying over their hearts[7] and refuse to understand what is contained in these words?

(7) O what stupidity! what idiocy! What reason do you have for (71d) saying, human being that you are, that an angel is party to the counsels of the Lord, creatures sharing the Creator's thought? Not for angels is it to be party to the counsels of the Lord, but to stand in waiting and fulfil sacred ministry. To grasp this, listen to Isaiah, most articulate of the prophets, when he says about the angelic powers above that "I saw the Cherubim and the Seraphim standing at God's right hand; they kept covering their faces and feet with their wings."[8] From which it is obvious that they could not bear the radiance beaming from that source, but stood in great fear and trembling. To stand in waiting before the Lord is, after all, proper

5. Jn 5.46.

6. This lengthy commentary on *Genesis*, as also that on the *Psalms*, shows Chrysostom's esteem for the Old Testament, even if his commentaries on the New Testament are more numerous. He outlines most fully his thinking on the relationship between the testaments in the two homilies *De Obscuritate Prophetiarum*. His concern that the Jews should arrive at a true appreciation of the OT by finding Christ there appears also in his Homily on Ps CIX:

> "I say this, not to set up the Old Testament in opposition to the New—perish the thought—but from a wish to put paid to the Jews' obtuseness. You see, what is contained in either testament is given to us by God and owes its origin to him; I only want to demonstrate the fact that the Jew who disallows the biblical references to Christ distorts the greater part of the inspired writings, nor could he clearly show the nobility of the Old Testament if he refused to admit the New." (*PG* 55,267)

7. Cf. 2 Cor 3.15.

8. A precis of Is 6.1–2. Chrysostom has a series of six homilies on the opening verses of ch.6 of Isaiah, which he finds such a fertile field for a study of the inspiration of Scripture. See R. Hill, "St. John Chrysostom's teaching on inspiration in 'Six homilies on Isaiah,'" *VigC* 22 (1968) 19–37.

to creatures. These people, however, who understand nothing of what is contained in the words, idly say the first thing that comes into their head. Hence it falls to us (72a) to refute their stupidity and teach the children of the Church the truth of the words.

(8) So who is this to whom he says, "'Let us make a human being'"?[9] Who else is it than the Angel of Great Counsel, Wonderful Counsellor, Figure of Authority, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come,[10] Only-begotten Son of God, like the Father in being, through whom all things were created? To him is said, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'" This text also deals a mortal blow to those entertaining the position of Arius. I mean, he did not say by way of command, Make such a creature, as though to a subordinate or to one inferior in being, but "'Let us make'" with great deference to an equal. And what follows shows us further the equality in being; it says, you see, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'" Here again, however, other heretics arise (72b) assailing the dogmas of the Church; they say, Look: he said, "'In our image'"—and from these words they want to speak of the divine in human terms, which is the ultimate example of error, namely, to cast in human form him who is without shape, without appearance, without change, and to attribute limbs and forms to the one who has no body. What could match this madness, people not simply refusing to derive any profit from the teaching of the inspired[11] Scriptures, but even incurring severe harm from them? I mean, they are in a similar predicament to people who are ill and suffering impairment of their bodily vision: just as the latter have a revulsion for the sunlight on account of their weakness of vision and invalids turn away from the healthier foods, so

9. This is still a challenging question for Jewish commentators like Speiser, who translates the Heb. text of 1.26 as "I will make;" see also his note on the verse (*Genesis* 4–7).

10. Is 9.6.

11. *Theopneustos* is the adjective Chrysostom employs of the Scriptures here and elsewhere as "inspired"; his commonest verb for the charism is *en–echo*. See greater detail in R. Hill, "Chrysostom's terminology for the inspired Word," *EB* 41 (1983) 367–373.

too those ailing in spirit and handicapped in their mind's vision (72c) have lost the power to look directly at the light of truth.

(9) So let us do for them what lies in our power and offer them a helping hand, conversing with them in a spirit of great kindness. Blessed Paul, after all, encouraged us to do this when he said, "Instruct your adversaries with gentleness, in the hope that God will grant them a change of heart leading to knowledge of truth, and they may return to a sober mind and escape from the snare of the devil, by whom they were held as captives at his pleasure."[12] Do you see how he declared in the words he chose that they were overcome, as it were, by some drunken stupor? To say, "return to a sober mind," after all, suggested they were in a state of intoxication. Likewise he says, "held captive by the devil," as though to say they are ensnared in traps. What is required of us is much kindness and tolerance so as to be able to rescue them (72d) and lead them out of the devil's snares. So let us say to them, Make your escape slowly but surely, look towards the light of righteousness, study the precision of the words. You see, in saying, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness,'" he did not stop there, but through the following verse made clear to us what was the reason for choosing the word "image." What in fact does the text go on to say? "'Let them have control of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, and all the reptiles creeping on the earth.'" So "image" refers to the matter of control, not anything else,[13] in other words, God created the human being as having control of everything on earth, and nothing on earth is greater than the human being, under whose authority everything falls.

(10) Yet if, despite such great precision in terms, there are

12. 2 Tm 2.25–26.

13. A perennial puzzle for Gn commentators, the meaning of "image and likeness," generally approached by them (as by Chrysostom here) through the sequence of ideas in the text. Only in recent years has the discovery of the Ebla tablets deciphered the notion of *demuth*, "likeness," in ancient Heb. as a deputy deity, with responsibility (in this case) for all creation. No wonder the text is so pregnant for conservationists, and "image" is so rich a term for Paul in his Christology.

still those spoiling for a fight who would want to say "image" is used in terms (73a) of form, we will say to them: that means he is not only man but also woman, for both have the same form. But this would make no sense. I mean, listen to Paul's words: "It is not proper for a man to cover his head, being image and glory of God, whereas the woman is man's glory."[14] One is in command, the other is subordinate, just as God had also said to woman from the beginning, "your yearning will be for your husband, and he will be your master."[15] You see, since it is on the basis of command that the image was received and not on the basis of form, man commands everything whereas woman is subservient[16]—hence Paul's words about man, that he is constituted God's image and glory, whereas woman is man's glory. If, however, he had been speaking about form, he would not have distinguished between them, man and woman being identical in type, after all.

(11) Do you see the full truth of it, (73b) how he left us no grounds for defense on the part of those bent on being brazen? All the same, even if this is the situation, let us not desist from our patience in dealing with these people, "in the hope that God will grant them a change of heart leading to knowledge of truth." So let us not slacken in our efforts to show great kindness, in the expectation of being able to wrest them from the devil's deceit; and let us, if we think fit, propose to them blessed Paul's words addressed to the citizens of Athens: "We ought not think the deity is like gold, silver, or stone, or carving from man's skill or imagination."[17] Do you notice the wise teacher, with how much precision he disposes of every error of theirs? I mean, he says not only that the deity is to be distinguished from bodily figure but that human imagining could not shape anything of the kind.

14. 1 Cor 11.7.

15. Gn 3.16.

16. Chrysostom's sexism, commented on in Introduction 14, seems particularly perverse here; he seems to be invoking Paul's (cultural) distinction between man (*anēr*, male) and woman (*gunē*) to make a case that Gn 1.26, in speaking of the human being (*anthrōpos*), means "man" only in the sense of "male."

17. Acts 17.29.

(12) Argue (73c) the point with them constantly on these matters and don't desist from bringing them to their attention in the hope that they may yield, in the hope that they may agree to look at the full face of truth. And while not desisting from debate with them in a spirit of great kindness and certainty, hold fast yourselves, I urge you, to the dogmas of the Church with close attention, without confusing the drift of the expression. Instead, argue the point in friendly exchange with Jews, on the one hand, showing them the words have reference not to some one of the ministering powers but to the only-begotten Son of God himself; to those holding Arian views, on the other hand, prove from this text the Son's equality with the Father; and to those imagining the deity has human form bring into play the words of blessed Paul. (73d) Root out those noxious ailments springing up like weeds among the dogmas of the Church,[18] and at the same time see to it that religious teachings are strengthened in them.

(13) You see, I wish and pray that you would all hold fast to right order as teachers, that you would not simply be listeners to what is said by us but also transmit it to others, casting your net for those still in error so as to bring them to the way of truth—as Paul says, "Edify one another,"[19] and, "With fear and trembling work out your own salvation."[20] In this way we will have the satisfaction of seeing the Church grow in numbers, and you will enjoy more abundant favor from above through the great care you show for your members. God, you know, does not wish Christians to be concerned only for themselves but also to edify others, not simply through their teaching but also through their lifestyle and the way they live it; after all, nothing is such an attraction to the way of truth as probity of life—in other words, (74a) people pay less attention to what we say than to what we do. As proof that this is

18. "The dogmas of the Church" is not a frequent phrase in Chrysostom's mouth; his appeal to authority is normally an appeal to the Scriptures. In this case of Trinitarian and Christological dogmas, however, we must remember Chrysostom is living in the wake of the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381).

19. 1 Thes 5.11. 20. Phil 2.12.

the case—I mean, even if we debate the issue thousands of times and argue about forgiveness but do nothing to demonstrate it in practice, the good our words do will not match the harm done by our behavior; whereas if we give demonstration of it in practice before our talking and after our talking, we will be shown to be trustworthy in preaching what we practice, since Christ also has declared such people blessed in the words, "Blessed is the one who does and teaches"[21]—as proof, then, consider how he put doing before teaching. You see, provided practice comes first, even if teaching doesn't follow, the actions themselves suffice to teach more conspicuously than words the people observing us.

(14) Let us, therefore, in all cases give attention to teaching in action first and later in words, (74b) lest we too hear from Paul, "You teach others, but don't you teach yourself?"[22] And whenever we intend to advise someone to bring their conduct into line in the important things in life, let us be careful to bring ourselves into line in these matters so as to lend greater conviction to our teaching; let our every care be for the salvation of souls, and for ways of curbing the motions of the flesh and demonstrating a real fast. Abstinence from food, after all, is undertaken for this purpose, to curb the exuberance of the flesh and bring the beast under control. The person fasting ought most of all keep anger in check, learn the lesson of mildness and kindness, have a contrite heart, banish the flood of unworthy passions, (74c) keep before one's eyes that unsleeping eye and that incorruptible tribunal, avoid becoming enthralled by money, be lavish in almsgiving, drive all ill-will to one's neighbor from the soul. This is real fasting, as Isaiah says when speaking as God's mouthpiece: "I did not choose this fast, says the Lord—not to bend your neck like a dog collar, nor to make your bed of dust and ashes, not to call a fast of this kind acceptable, says the Lord." So what kind, pray? "Loose the bonds of crippling contracts," he says, "share your bread with the hungry, welcome the homeless poor into your home." And if you do these things, he says, "then your Light

21. A precis of Mt 5.19. 22. Rom 2.21.

will burst forth like the dawn, and your healing (74d) will quickly emerge."[23]

(15) Do you see, dearly beloved, what true fasting really is? Let us perform this kind, and not entertain the facile notion held by many that the essence of fasting lies in going without food till evening. This is not the end in view, but that we should demonstrate, along with abstinence from food, abstinence also from whatever is harmful, and should give close attention to spiritual duties. The person fasting ought be reserved, peaceful, meek, humble, indifferent to the esteem of this world. You see, just as one has neglected the soul, so it is necessary to neglect empty esteem as well, and to have regard only for him who examines our inmost being,[24] and with great care to direct prayers and confessions (75a) to God, and provide for oneself according to one's ability the help that comes from almsgiving.

(16) This precept, after all, this most of all is able to cancel all our sins and snatch us from the fire of Gehenna, provided we perform it with generosity and don't do it to show off to people. Why do I say not to show off? You see, if we are right-minded, we ought to perform this action solely for the reason that it is the right thing to do and a mark of solidarity with our fellows, not for the rewards promised from the Lord. But when we are unable to conjure up any inspiring motive, let us seek to perform the deed for the right reason, never angling after the good opinion of people, lest we have the bad fortune to lose the reward while at the same time outlaying the expense.

(17) This precaution applies not only to almsgiving; instead, let us in the case of every spiritual good deed take care (75b) and do nothing with a view to people's esteem, since nothing will be of any benefit to us, whether we fast or pray, whether we show mercy or do anything else, unless it is done solely for him who knows both what escapes people's attention and what lies hidden in the depths of our heart. If, after all, you have an eye to rewards from him, human being that you are, why wish

23. Is 58.5–8. 24. Cf Ps 7.9.

to be commended by your fellow human being? Why say commended? frequently such a person, instead of commending you, belittles you. There are plenty of people, you know, who deep down are so miserable as to misrepresent even our finer achievements. So why, tell me, put a premium on their distorted judgment? You see, there is no single thing done by us that escapes the notice of that unsleeping eye, so we should keep that in mind (75c) and manage our life with scrupulous care like people due before long to render an account of our words, our deeds and our very thoughts.

(18) Accordingly, let us not neglect our own salvation. You see, dearly beloved, nothing is as important as virtue; virtue it is, after all, that snatches us from Gehenna in the world to come and bestows on us the enjoyment of the kingdom of heaven, and in this world renders us superior to all those spending their efforts in idle and vain schemes—not simply human beings, but the very demons as well—and makes us stronger than the enemy of our salvation (I mean the devil). So what could be more important than virtue when it makes those striving for it superior not only to scheming human beings but also the demons? Virtue it is to scorn all human affairs, (75d) to keep the mind on future realities at each hour of the day, to seek no present good but to know that everything human is a shadow and a dream or even worse. Virtue it is to adopt the attitude of a corpse in regard to the affairs of this life and like a corpse take no active interest in what threatens the soul's salvation, but only in regard to spiritual things to be alive and take active interest, as Paul also said. "I am alive, though it is no longer me but Christ alive in me."[25]

(19) Accordingly, dearly beloved, let us do everything as people who have put on Christ, and not grieve the Holy Spirit. So whenever we are disquieted by passion, or untimely desire, or anger, or rage, or envy, let us think of him who dwells within us, let us drive far away every such inclination. Let our regard be (76a) for the pre-eminence of grace showered on us by God and let us curb all the passions of the flesh, so that

25. Gal 2.20.

after we have striven lawfully in this brief and transient existence we may be rewarded with that marvellous crown in the time to come—a fearful time for sinners but a time to be longed for by those clad in virtue—and that we may be found worthy of those unspeakable goods, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 9

On what follows the verse, "'Let us make a human being in our image,'" and against those who ask, Why were the wild beasts created? and, What good comes from their being made? And to prove that this most of all shows regard for the human being and God's unspeakable love.

O BEGIN (76b) BY AN analogy with hardworking farmers. Whenever they see a rich pasture with great depth of soil, they sow the seed liberally and give it their constant and undivided attention, surveying the scene each day in case somewhere some useless thing capable of damaging the seeds should thwart the efforts they have put into it. Now, in exactly the same way we too have seen your spiritual hunger and your great readiness to listen, and each day we have been exerting ourselves to have the thinking of the Holy Scriptures enter your mind; we have also shown to you what can harm this spiritual seed, lest you be caught out and the sound teaching of the dogmas be undermined by the assaults of people endeavouring to infiltrate the Church's dogmas with notions from their own reasoning. (76c) To you falls the task of scrupulously safeguarding what has been entrusted to you and preserving the memory of it intact so that you can follow with ease the sequel. You see, if the present opportunity is not taken for us to go rather deeply into the meaning, and for you to develop your understanding, now that it is the season of Lent, now that our limbs are more nimble for swimming and our mental vision sharper, without the hindrance of the evil current of luxury, but with our spirit strengthened against drowning, when on earth will it be possible for us to achieve it? When luxury, drunkenness and gluttony are rampant, and the evils they spawn?

(2) Don't you see that people wanting to find the gems that come from the sea don't make the discovery just by sitting down at the water's edge and counting the waves, but cast themselves into deep water, descend into the very bosom of the deep, (76d) as you might say, and in this fashion chance upon the things they're looking for? Yet what great benefit would the discovery of these gems bring to your life? Hopefully they would bring no great harm or injury. From this source, after all, spring a multitude of troubles, from the desire for money and the frenzy these things cause. Still, despite the great harm arising from them, people obsessed with these things stop at nothing: they expose themselves to danger and undergo great effort so as to be able to find what they're looking for. In the case of the Holy Scriptures, on the contrary, and these spiritual gems of great value, there is no cause for suspecting danger, the effort is not great whereas the gain is beyond telling, provided we enthusiastically put into it what lies in our power. Grace, you see, is always active, seeking those (77a) that welcome it with readiness. Such, after all, is our Lord: when he sees an alert soul and fervent desire, out of his own prodigality he lavishes upon it riches of his that surpass the request being made.

(3) Accordingly, dearly beloved, knowing this as you do, purify your thinking of the affairs of this life, open wide the horizons of your mind, welcome with great enthusiasm what the Spirit furnishes us with, so that like rich and fruitful soil you may produce a crop in excess of what is sown—in one case a hundredfold, in another sixtyfold, in another thirtyfold. You heard on the previous days of the ineffable wisdom of the artificer of all visible realities, and how he produced everything solely by his word and desire. He said, remember, "'Let it be made,'" and it was made, and immediately all the elements were produced; (77b) his word sufficed for the sustenance of all created things, not simply because it was a word but because it was God's word.

(4) You recall the arguments we brought to bear against those saying that existing things came into being from underlying matter and substituting their own folly for the dogmas

of the Church. You learnt why, on the one hand, he produced the sky in finished form, but left the earth shapeless and incomplete. We gave you, remember, at that point two reasons for this: firstly, so that you might learn the power of the Lord from the more complete thing and not waver in your reasoning with the thought that it was created out of lack of power; and secondly, since the earth has been created as mother and nurse for us, and from it we are nourished and enjoy all other things, and to it we return in the end, being as it is for us all both homeland and tomb, (77c) he shows it to us shapeless from the beginning in case the very pressure of necessity, if nothing else, should lead us to conjure up some grandiose ideas about it, instead of learning even through these very things that all the above-mentioned advantages are to be attributed no longer to the nature of the earth but to the power of the Creator. Again, you learnt how he effected the separation of the waters by providing for the creation of this visible firmament; you saw the living beings arising both from the waters and from the earth.

(5) We now feel the need to rehearse these details and repeat them for you, brethren, not idly and to no purpose, but that the listeners may have a stronger basis of belief and the details may be riveted more surely in your mind; thus the instruction may be adequate also for those not present on the first occasion, and they may not suffer any handicap from their absence. The reason is that a loving father keeps the leftovers from the table for his absent children so that when they come (77d) they may find the leftovers kept for them as a consolation for their absence. Accordingly, we too have as much care for everyone of you coming along here as for our own limbs, and we make your progress our own pride and glory, wanting you all to be shown to be perfect and mature for the glory of God, the credit of the Church and our boast.

(6) And at the risk of seeming to be a nuisance, come now, I would like briefly to refresh your memory of what was said to you yesterday. You saw the difference between the shaping of the human being and the creation of the other things; you heard the degree of importance he imparted to that founder

of our race, and how in the course of that very shaping he manifested by the down-to-earth quality of the words and expressions[1] the esteem he had for the being about to be created when he said, "'Let us make a human being in (78a) our image and likeness.'" You learnt what is the meaning of "in our image," that it is not in the order of being but a similarity of command, that he spoke not in terms of a formal image but in terms of command—hence the postscript, "'Let them have control of the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven, the wild beasts and the reptiles of the earth.'"

(7) Now, on this matter pagans make a rejoinder to us with the claim that the truth of the sentence is not confirmed in practice; we do not, in fact, control the wild beasts, as was promised, but they control us. But this isn't true, either: whenever a human being comes on the scene, at once the wild animals take to flight. On the other hand, if at some time we are harmed by them when they're under the pressure of starvation or we attack them, this evidently happens not because of their control over us but from some fault of ours. Likewise when brigands attack us and find us not slothful (78b) but armed to the teeth, it's not an example of their power but of our care for our own welfare. Meantime let us listen to the words of the text; it says, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'" As the word "image" indicated a similitude of command, so too "likeness," with the result that we become like God to the extent of our human power[2]—that is to say, we resemble him in our gentleness and mildness and in regard to virtue, as Christ also says, "Be like your Father in heaven."[3] You see, just as on this wide and spacious earth

1. This is another favorite term of Chrysostom's, basic to his thinking on Scripture and the "considerateness" it exemplifies: *pachutēs*, the solid, material, down-to-earth, incarnational character of biblical language, employed by divine and human authors in view of our "limitations." It is clearly an Antiochene notion, not likely to receive much attention in Alexandrian speculation.

2. Chrysostom astutely divines the sense of "image," as modern archeological discoveries have confirmed (cf. Homily 8, note 13 above)—and then typically gives a moral twist to his exegesis.

3. Mt 5:45.

some animals are tamer and others more ferocious, so too in the wide spaces of our soul some of our ideas are more lethargic and resemble brute beasts, others more ferocious and savage. So there is need to control (78c) and tame them and submit them to the rule of reason. How do you get control of the wildness of thought, you ask? What are you saying, human being that you are? We subdue lions and tame their spirit, and do you doubt if you're able to transform the ferocity of your thinking into mildness? Further, ferocity is naturally proper to wild beasts and mildness unnatural, whereas the opposite is true in your case: mildness is natural, ferocity and savagery unnatural. Are you, then, who expel the natural and induce the unnatural in wild animals, unable yourself to maintain what is natural? What great condemnation this brings against you! Something in fact that is more remarkable and surprising still is this: Although in a lion's nature there is the added difficulty that the lion is a wild beast deprived of reason, we still often see lions led meekly through the market place, (78d) and many people often throw money from their shops to the person getting some reward for skill and cunning in taming the wild beast. However, in a person reason is present, and the fear of God, and many other advantages from other sources—so don't adduce excuses and pretexts. It is, after all, quite within your capabilities to be meek and mild and gentle, if you have the good will. The text says, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness.'"

(8) But let us return to the question proposed before. It emerges, you know, from what we've said that the human being from the very beginning had complete control of the wild beasts; the text says, remember, "'Let them have control of the fish of the sea and the birds of heaven, the wild beasts and the reptiles of the earth.'" The fact that now we have fear and dread of the wild animals and have lost control of them, I personally don't dispute; but this doesn't (79a) betray a false promise on God's part. From the beginning, you see, things weren't like this; instead, the wild beasts were in fear and trembling, and responded to direction. But when through disobedience human beings forfeited their position of trust,

their control was also lost. As evidence, after all, that everything was placed under the human being's control, listen to Scripture saying, "He brought the wild animals and all the brute beasts to Adam to see what he would call them."[4] And seeing the animals near him, he didn't shrink back, but like a master giving names to slaves in his service, he gave them all names; the text says, "They each bore the name Adam gave them," this being a symbol of his dominion. Hence God was wanting to teach him through this the dignity of his authority, so he entrusted to him the giving of names.

(9) So this instance (79b) suffices to demonstrate the fact that from the beginning the wild beasts were not an object of terror to the human being; yet there is another instance no less significant and much clearer. Namely? The serpent's conversation with the woman. You see, had the animals been frightening to human beings, the woman at sight of the serpent would not have stood her ground, would not have taken its advice, would not have conversed with it so comfortably; instead, she would have been terrified by its appearance and taken flight. In fact, however, she both converses with it and shows no fear; this fear, after all, is not yet to the fore.

(10) But once sin came on the scene, there was evidently loss both of esteem and of authority. Just as in the case of servants those that enjoy a good name are held in fear by their fellow servants whereas those that have given offence fear the others, so too in the case of the human being: while they enjoyed God's trust (79c) they were an object of fear even to the animals, but when they fell they eventually had to fear even the least of their fellow slaves. If you don't hold with what we've said, show me that before sin the beasts were an object of fear to the human being. But you couldn't. If, however, fear came on the scene afterwards, this is also an extraordinary token of God's loving kindness. I mean, if after the com-

4. A paraphrase of Gn 2.19. Chrysostom, of course, is unlikely to draw to his congregation's attention that he is here switching from one creation narrative (ch.1) to another (ch.2)—if only because he is unaware of it himself. See Introduction 16 for his relatively uncritical scholarship, which emerges also in his general line of argumentation here and elsewhere.

mandment had been broken by the human beings the esteem accorded them had remained unimpaired, they would not easily have risen from their fall. You see, when obedient and disobedient people enjoy the same esteem, they are more inclined to evil and don't quickly recover from evil. After all, if under the pressure of fear, retribution and punishment they do not come to their senses, what condition would they be in if they suffered nothing for the terrible mistakes they made? (79d) So it is out of his providential care for us that he has removed us from our position of control.

(11) Consider now, I ask you, dearly beloved, in this instance God's ineffable love as well, how, on the one hand, Adam infringed the whole commandment and completely broke the law, while, on the other hand, God in his loving kindness proved his goodness superior to our transgressions and did not cancel all our esteem nor remove the human being from all control. Instead, he withdrew from their control only those beings that did not have the greatest contribution to make to their livelihood, whereas the most necessary and useful creatures which performed great service to our living he allowed to remain in subjection and servitude. He left at any rate herds of cattle to draw the plough, to till the soil, to sow the seed; he left the beasts of burden to assist our efforts in transporting heavy loads; he left the flocks of sheep (80a) so that we might have sufficient supply of garments for clothing; and he left other kinds of animals to supply us with plenty of resources. You see, though in punishing the human being for disobedience he said "'In the sweat of your brow may you eat your bread,'"[5] he took care, lest this sweat and toil be unbearable, to lighten the pressure and burden of work with the multitude of beasts sharing with us the labor and distress. He acted in precisely the way a loving and caring master would in punishing his servant, following the punishing with some healing; in just this way God brings condemnation to the sinner and then wants to render this condemnation lighter in every way, condemning us to ceaseless toil and sweat, on the

5. Gn 3.19.

one hand, and providing many kinds of brute beasts to share the labor with us on the other. (80b) The result is that you have the bestowal of esteem, and its being taken back, the implanting of fear of wild beasts—all done, if you study it precisely and in a spirit of gratitude, with an abundance of wisdom, of care, of love.

(12) Now, let us give thanks to him for all these favors and be grateful to him for doing us all these kindnesses. He is, after all, not looking for anything heavy and burdensome from us—simply acknowledgement of such favors and thanksgiving to him for them. Not that he needs it, being self-sufficient as he is, but for us to learn to win over the supplier of good things, and not to be ungrateful, but to give evidence of virtue that is worthy of these kindnesses and such great care. This is the way, after all, for us to prompt him to even greater care of us. So let us not grow slack, I beseech you; instead, let each of us, as each hour passes and to the extent of our capabilities, (80c) take stock within himself of the favors done to us, not only those shared with others but also personal ones, not only those acknowledged and obvious to all, but also individual ones that have escaped most people's notice, such being the way to render unceasing thanks to the Lord. This is the highest form of sacrifice, this is a perfect offering, this will prove the basis of confidence for us—just how, I will tell you.

(13) You see, people who constantly rehearse these things in their own mind come to gain a precious knowledge of their own unworthiness, on the one hand, and on the other to realize God's unspeakable and surpassing love, as well as to focus not on what their sins deserve but on his goodness. They then conduct their affairs in the following way: they form a humble opinion of themselves, keep a tight control on their reasoning, suppress any conceit or arrogance, learn to stay within limits, to rise above worldly opinion, to set all visible realities at nought, (80d) to ponder future goods and the life that has neither limit nor end. The person so disposed in soul offers to God a true and acceptable sacrifice, as the biblical author says: "A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; a contrite and humble

heart God does not despise."[6] It is not, after all, sanctions and punishments that win over right-minded servants so much as acts of kindness and the knowledge that they have not been punished according to their deserts.

(14) Let us accordingly keep a tight control on our reasoning, I beseech you, and form a humble opinion of ourselves, especially at this time when the season of fasting provides assistance to that end. You see, if we have this disposition, we will be able both to pray with mind unfettered and win grace from above by confessing our sins. To learn that (81a) the Lord is pleased with such souls, listen to his words: "'On whom shall I look with favor if not on the person of meekness and peace and the one who trembles at my words?'"[7] Hence Christ had this to say as well: "Learn from me that I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your soul."[8] After all, people of humble disposition could never be swept into a rage or become angry with their neighbor, since their spirit is so much at peace and occupied only with its own concerns. What could be more blessed than a soul disposed like this? Such a person rests continually in the shelter of harbor far from every storm, revelling in the calm of reason. Hence Christ also said: "You will find rest for your soul." Just as therefore the person who has reduced to calm all these passions enjoys much rest, so slothful and diffident people, unable (81b) to keep in due control the passions rising within them, are exposed to continual storms, have war on their hands at the home front, can be thrown into disarray without anyone needing to be present, and have to endure much buffeting from tempests; hence, with the impact of the billows and the onset of the hurricane of evil blasts, they often go under, as their craft sinks under them from the helmsman's ineptitude.

(15) So, we ought stay alert and clear-headed, and pay constant and unremitting attention to the salvation of our soul. The Christian, you see, must be ever equipped to deal with the passions of the flesh, keep fresh in mind the laws given us

6. Ps 51.17.
7. Is 66.2.
8. Mt 11.29.

by the common Lord of all and shelter behind the protection they give, take advantage of his long-suffering in our regard no more than is necessary, and not postpone humbling ourselves till harsh experience comes, lest it be said about us also, (81c) "When he brought them to the point of death, then they turned to him."[9] Having fasting as our ally, therefore, dearly beloved, let us all hasten to the confession of our sins, refrain from all wickedness, and practice every virtue. This, after all, is what the blessed author David teaches when he says, "Turn from evil and do good."[10] Provided we conduct ourselves in this way, and demonstrate along with abstinence from food likewise abstinence from evil, we will ourselves be able to enjoy greater confidence and be found worthy of a more generous share of loving kindness from God both in this life and on that fearful day yet to come, thanks to the prayers and intercession of those acceptable to him and the (81d) grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

9. Ps 78.34. 10. Ps 37.27.

HOMILY 10

An exhortation to those ashamed to attend the evening congregation after eating; and from the verse, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness,'" up to the verse, "God made the human being; in God's image he made them; male and female he made them."[1]

UR CONGREGATION today is smaller, and the participants in the action less numerous. Why is this, and what is responsible for it? Perhaps some people are ashamed to attend this spiritual banquet after their material repast, and this is responsible for their absence. Let them, however, heed the words of the wise man: "Shame it is that leads to sin, and shame it is that is glory and grace."[2] It is not cause for shame for a person to have partaken of (82a) a material repast and then come to spiritual food. You see, spiritual affairs are not divided into distinct times like human affairs; in other words, discourse on spiritual topics is suited to any time of the day. Why do I say time of the day? Even if night falls, that is no obstacle to spiritual teaching. Hence Paul said in writing to Timothy, "Press on whether the time is ripe or not: argue, censure, cajole."[3] Listen further to blessed Luke when he says that "as Paul was due to leave Troas the next day, he began talking to them and prolonged his discourse to midnight."[4] Was time a problem for him, I ask you, or did it interrupt the thread of his teaching? No. The alert listener, (82b) even after dining, would be in a suitable condition for this spiritual gathering, just as by the same token the slothful[5] and

1. Gn 1.27. 2. Sir 4.21.
3. 2 Tm 4.2. 4. Acts 20.7.
5. Again it is *rhathumia*—indifference, sloth, negligence, carelessness—that Chrysostom sees as the besetting weakness of the Christian.

dilatory person even on an empty stomach would get no benefit from it.

(2) I'm not making this point to undermine the importance of fasting—God forbid: on the contrary, I'm all in favor of it. Instead, my intention is to teach you to take an active part in spiritual matters with alert mind, not just follow along out of habit. The shameful thing, you see, is not attendance at this spiritual teaching after partaking of food, but attendance with an attitude of sloth, addiction to passion, and failure to control the movements of the flesh. There is nothing wrong with eating—God forbid; the harmful thing is gluttony, stuffing yourself with food in excess of need, and ruining your stomach—something, after all, that destroys even the pleasure that comes from food. (82c) So, too, in like manner, there is nothing wrong with drinking in moderation, but rather with surrendering to drunkenness and losing control of your reasoning through excess. If, however, dearly beloved, you are unable to go a whole day without food because of physical weakness, no right-minded person could find fault with you in this. We have, you see, a gentle and loving Lord who demands nothing of us beyond our capabilities. In other words, it is not arbitrarily that he looks for fasting and abstinence from food to be performed by us, nor simply for the sake of our remaining without food, but rather that we may be detached from things of this life and devote all our spare time to spiritual matters. If we conduct our lives with sober mind, use all our spare time in spiritual matters, eat only for nourishment (82d) and spend our whole life in good practices, we would have no need of the help that comes from fasting. But since human nature is lazy and is given rather to indulgence and luxury, the loving Lord accordingly like a kindly father devised for us the healing that comes from fasting so that the effects of luxury might be cut out of us and we might replace worldly concerns with performance of spiritual exercises.

(3) So, if there are some of the congregation here who because of bodily weakness are prevented from going without food and incapable of doing so, I advise them both to come to terms with their bodily weakness, and not to deprive them-

selves of this spiritual instruction (83a) but rather to show greater zeal for it. There are, after all, better ways than abstinence from food to open for us the doors of a confident approach to God.[6] Accordingly, let the person who partakes of food and is unable to fast give evidence of more generous almsgiving, fervent prayers, and a heightened enthusiasm for listening to the divine sayings; let such a person be reconciled with enemies and eradicate from the soul all vindictiveness. If that is the intention, then such a person has practiced real fasting, and the kind the Lord requires most of all. Since he bids abstinence from food to be practiced (83b) for the sake of checking the movements of the flesh, let us render it amenable to the performance of the commandments. If, on the contrary, we are unlikely on account of bodily weakness to bring on ourselves the help that comes from fasting and yet give evidence of greater sloth, we unconsciously do ourselves the greatest harm. You see, if it is true that despite fasting omission of the aforementioned good deeds brings us no benefit, so much the more will this be true in the case of those who, being unable to take advantage of the remedy of fasting, still give evidence of greater sloth.

(4) Now, then, that you have learnt this from us, I beg you, those of you able to fast, develop in yourselves as far as possible this excellent and commendable enthusiasm. After all, "To the extent that our external self is diminished, the interior self is renewed."[7] Fasting, in other words, holds the body under restraint, checks its unruly movements, (83c) and, on the other hand, renders the soul transparent, gives it wings, makes it light and raises it on high. But as for those of our brethren unable to fast on account of bodily weakness, urge them not to desist from this spiritual diet; teach them and show them, as they have had communicated to them from us also, that it is not the person who eats and drinks in modera-

6. His biographers tell us that Chrysostom could speak from personal experience on the dangers of excessive zeal in fasting, having impaired his health while living the life of a solitary early in his career. Cf. Donald Attwater, *St John Chrysostom* (London 1959) 31.

7. 2 Cor 4.16, somewhat embellished to support Chrysostom's point.

tion that is unworthy of this audience but the lax and dissolute. Address to them also the apostolic dictum, that "the one who eats eats in the Lord, and the one who abstains abstains in the Lord, and gives thanks to God."[8] So the person fasting gives thanks to God for having the power to be able to withstand the rigors of fasting; and likewise the person who eats gives thanks to God that no harm can come from this for the soul's salvation, if that is God's will. (83d) The loving God, you see, has marked out for us such ways as it is impossible to mention, through which we can, if we wish, share in the utmost confidence.

(5) May our words therefore be sufficient on that subject for those who have been discouraged from attending; may we have removed the grounds for their shame by showing that they have no need to be ashamed on that account, as it is after all not eating that promotes shame but doing something evil. Sin is a great shame: if we commit it, not only ought we be ashamed of it but also conceal it and beat our breasts like people who have fallen—or rather, instead of allowing ourselves to give up in despair, we should hasten to confession and change of heart. Such is the Lord we have, you see, that he looks for nothing more from us (84a) after our committing sin, if perchance we are ensnared through sloth, than the confession of our faults and stopping short, not falling back into the same errors. If, on the other hand, we partake of nourishment in moderation, let us not at all be ashamed; it is the Lord, after all, who has fitted us with a body of such a kind that could not otherwise be sustained without partaking of that food, provided there is no going to excess. In fact, this moderate consumption contributes most of all to good health and condition. Don't you daily observe thousands of disorders stemming from laden tables and immoderate eating? What is the cause of gout? of migraine? of the flood of noxious humors? of countless other ailments? Do they not spring from intemperance and from pouring ourselves more wine than we should? I mean, just as a ship that becomes waterlogged

8. Rom 14.6.

quickly sinks (84b) and slips below the water level, so, too, a person who is given over to gluttony and drunkenness goes head over heels, brings reason down to a low level, and lies for all intents and purposes like a corpse, quite capable, on the one hand, of frequently doing evil, but, on the other hand, in a condition no better than corpses for doing anything good.

(6) Hence I urge you, in the words of blessed Paul, "don't direct care for your body in the direction of desire"[9] but towards subsistence and the ability to give evidence of much zeal in the performance of spiritual things with great enthusiasm. So, then, put all these considerations to these brethren of ours, and encourage them never to withdraw themselves from this spiritual fare; instead, even if they have eaten, let them come with great enthusiasm so as to receive instruction here and be able to withstand valiantly the devil's wiles. As for you yourselves, come now, let us at this stage lay before you the customary table, (84c) and reward you, dear people, for your zealous attention in listening and discharge the debt we owe you.

(7) You are quite well aware, of course, and recall to mind that we began to talk about the shaping of the human being, but were pressed for time and could not complete the whole lecture; instead we finished the instruction to do with the account of the wild beasts, showing that at first the human being had control over them and then lost it through the sin of disobedience. Hence today we want to complete the balance for you, and thus send you off. For the purpose of making the story clear to you, however, you need to recall where it was we broke off our teaching, so that we can begin from that point and thus complete the rest. So where did we interrupt our sermon? We were speaking on the verse, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness, and let them have control over the fish of the sea (84d) and the birds of heaven;'" the sermon developed into great length and a vast sea of thoughts arose before us, so that it was possible for us to proceed no further, but we stopped short at that point and

9. Rom 13.14.

reached onto none of what follows. Sacred Scripture, in any case, directly added the following: "God made the human being; in God's image he made them; male and female he made them. God blessed them with the words, 'Increase and multiply, fill the earth and gain dominion over it; have control of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the cattle, the whole earth and all the reptiles creeping on the earth.'"[10] The words are brief, but the treasure concealed (85a) in the brief words is great. You see, speaking through the Spirit this blessed author wants at this point to teach us something kept from human hearing. When he said, remember, "'Let us make a human being,'" the Creator of all applied his will, as it were, and his thought in demonstrating through this shape the importance given to the creature in process of formation, something he began to teach us before the process began. He also demonstrated the greatness of the control he was entrusting to the being in process of creation; hence, to his words, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness,'" he added, "'Let them have control of the fish of the sea.'" See how he reveals to us from the beginning the treasure hidden there. I mean, the biblical author, speaking through the divine Spirit, sees as subsisting and brought into being things not yet subsisting. So why, tell me, after his words, (85b) "'Let us make a human being,'" does he now say, "'Let *them* have control'"? Evidently he is already revealing to us at this point some mystery lying hidden. Who are to have control? Quite clearly he has spoken this way to hint at the formation of woman. Do you see how there is nothing in Sacred Scripture which is contained there idly or to no purpose?[11] Instead, even the chance word has treasure stored up in it.

(8) Don't be surprised, dearly beloved, at what I've said. Such, after all, is the way with all the biblical authors, to speak of things not yet created as though already created. You see,

10. Gn 1.27–28, where the Heb. makes no reference to the cattle.

11. Over and over again Chrysostom poses this reminder to his congregation of the "precision" of Sacred Scripture, providing him with the recipe for his exegesis/commentary, in which no detail of the text can be passed over. See Introduction 11,21.

since they perceive with the eyes of the spirit things due to happen after a great number of years, and accordingly view things as though already laid out in front of their very eyes, they describe everything in this way. To gain a clear understanding of this, listen to the words of blessed David prophesying in loud tones the events of Christ's crucifixion so many generations before the event: (85c) "They pierced my hands and my feet," and again, "They divided up my garments among themselves."[12] Do you see how ahead of time he announces, as though already happened, things due to take place much later? In this way, too, our blessed author gives us a hint about the formation of woman when he says cryptically, "'Let them have control of the fish of the sea.'" Then, going on, he says further in a clearer way, "God made the human being; in God's image he made them; male and female he made them." Notice how much precision he employs, saying the same thing once and again so that the words could be riveted in the minds of the listeners. You see, if this had not been an object of concern for him, it would have been enough to say, " God made the human being;" but he adds as well, "In God's image he made them." In other words, after teaching us through the previous verses what was the meaning of (85d) "in God's image," accordingly again at this point he repeats the very same notion by saying, "In God's image he made them." Lest he should leave some brazen pretext of controversy to those intent on contesting the Church's dogmas, he presses on a little further and teaches the same things again, that God employed the word "image" in the sense of controlling and having all creatures under subjection. Finally let us see what he is saying in this verse, " God made the human being; in God's image he made them; male and female he made them." What he hinted at above when saying, "'Let them have control,'" here he says more clearly, though he still teaches us this cryptically, since after all he has not yet taught us about the manner of formation or told us where woman comes from. He says, "Male and female he made them." (86a)

12. Ps 22.16,18.

Do you see how he describes what is not yet created as though already created? That's the way, you see, with the eyes of the spirit; I mean, these bodily eyes cannot see visible things in the same way that the eyes of the spirit can see things that are not visible and things that have no subsistence.

(9) So, after saying, "Male and female he made them" as though to bestow a blessing on each of them, he goes on, "God blessed them in the words, 'Increase and multiply, fill the earth and gain dominion over it, and have control of the fish of the sea.'" Behold the remarkable character of the blessing! I mean, those words, "'Increase and multiply and fill the earth,'" anyone could see are said of the brute beasts and the reptiles alike, whereas "'Gain dominion and have control'" are directed to the man and woman. See the Lord's loving kindness: even before creating her he makes her sharer in this control and bestows on her the blessing. "'Have control,'" the text says, "'of the fish of the (86b) sea, the birds of heaven and all the cattle, the whole earth and all the reptiles creeping on the earth.'" Did you notice the ineffable authority? Did you notice all created things placed under this being's control? No longer entertain casual impressions of this rational being, but rather realize the extent of the esteem and the Lord's benignity towards it, and be amazed at his love beyond all telling.

(10) "God said: 'Lo, I have given you every crop upon all the earth bearing seed fit for sowing, and every tree containing fruit with seed fit for sowing; they are for your food. And for all the beasts of the earth, all the birds of heaven and every reptile creeping on the earth—whatever has a spirit of life in it—I have given every green crop for food.' This is what happened."[13] See, I ask you, dearly beloved, the precision of the words and the Lord's ineffable love, (86c) and do not pass heedlessly by anything of what is said. "God said," the text reads, "'Lo, I have given you every crop for sowing,'" as though the remark—even this one—is addressed to two people, despite the fact the woman is not yet produced. Then, in order that you may learn his surpassing goodness, see how the signs

13. Gn 1.29–30.

of his love do not stop short at the man and the woman still to be produced but reach to the very beasts: after saying to the human beings, "'They are for your food,'" he added, "'And for all the beasts of the earth.'"

(11) See again further depths of his loving kindness: he showed concern not only for the tame beasts that meet our needs for food and service but also for the wild beasts. Who could adequately arrive at the extent of this boundless goodness? "'They are for your food,'" the text says. "'And for all the beasts of the earth, (86d) all the birds of heaven and every reptile creeping on the earth—whatever has a spirit of life in it—I have given every green crop for food.'" The Lord's care for the human being created by him emerges in all its fulness. I mean, after producing him and entrusting him with complete control of creation, the good Lord took steps to prevent his being distressed at once from the outset by the sight of the vast number of beasts through a feeling of being powerless to provide adequately for the nourishment of so many animals: before any such thought came to him about this, the Lord comforted him, so to say, by showing him that he along with all the brute beasts had plenty to eat, as the earth provided for their nourishment thanks to the Lord's direction. So, after saying, "'They are for your food,'" he immediately added, "'And for all the beasts of the earth, all the birds of heaven and every reptile creeping on the earth—whatever has a spirit of life in it (87a) I have given every green crop for food.' This is what happened."

(12) Whatever the Lord commanded, the text says, took effect, and he established everything in proper order—hence he immediately added, "God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good."[14] Who could adequately extol the precision of Sacred Scripture? I mean, behold here, too, how by speaking one phrase, "God saw everything he had made," it curbed the tongue of all those endeavoring, despite all this evidence, to gainsay it. "God saw everything he had made," the text says, "and behold, it was very good." You see,

14. Gn 1.31.

after saying in the case of each of the created things, "God saw that it was good," at this point when everything was completed, and the works of the sixth day had reached finality, and the being destined (87b) to enjoy all the created things had been brought forth in their midst, the text says: "God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good." Notice how by gathering all the created things together under this one word, "everything," it confers commendation on each of them. I mean, it didn't just say "everything" and stop there, but added "that he had made;" nor did it conclude at that point, but said, "And behold it was good," even "very good"—that is to say, "completely good." So when the Lord, the one bringing things from non-being to being, declares creatures to be good and completely good, who would dare, even if bursting with arrogant folly, to open his mouth and gainsay the words uttered by God? After all, amongst the visible creatures it was not only light that was created but also darkness in opposition to light, and not only day but also night (87c) in opposition to day. Amongst the growth springing up from the earth it was not only plants that are useful but also those that are harmful, and not only trees that bear fruit but also those that bear none; and not only tame animals but also wild and unruly ones. Amongst the creatures emerging from the waters it was not only fish but also sea monsters and other fierce creatures. It was not only inhabited land but also the unpeopled; not only level plains but also mountains and woods. Amongst birds it was not only tame ones and those suitable for our food but also wild and unclean ones, hawks and vultures and many others of that kind. Amongst the creatures produced from the earth it was not only tame animals but also snakes, vipers, serpents, lions and leopards. In the sky it was not only showers and kindly breezes but also hail and snow. And (87d) if anyone had a mind to examine the list in detail, you would find in each case not only things considered not useful to us but even harmful, so that no one would be free after this to survey created things and find fault with their origins, saying, What's the purpose of this one? What's the use of this one? This one's well made, but this other one not so.

Hence, Sacred Scripture checks those people endeavoring to show ingratitude, you might say, by adding after the creation of everything on the sixth day, "God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good."

(13) What could match this for reliable comment, when the Creator of all gives the verdict in person and says that everything created is good, and even very good? So, whenever you see someone moved by his own reasoning (88a) and intent on gainsaying Sacred Scripture, shun him like a lunatic; or better, don't shun him, but out of pity for his ignorance quote the words from Sacred Scripture and say that "God saw everything he had made" and said "'behold, it is very good,'" and perhaps you will be able to check his unruly tongue. (After all, take the case of human affairs. When we see people of good reputation giving their opinion of things that happen, we don't contradict them, but rather fall in with their opinion and often prefer their opinion to our own. So much the more in the case of the God of all things, the Creator of everything we can see, should we do likewise: we should learn his judgement on things, subdue our own reasonings, and instead of presuming further we should be content with the knowledge that everything has been produced by a word coming from him and by his loving kindness, (88b) and that nothing has been created idly or to no purpose. Even if, through the limitations of our own reasoning, we should be in ignorance of created things, he himself in his own wisdom and thoughtful love produced all things.

(14) "Evening came," the text goes on, "and morning came: a sixth day." At the close of the sixth day he also brought to a close all his creating—hence the addition of the words, "Heaven and earth and all their array were completed."[15] Notice the character of Sacred Scripture, nothing superfluous, nothing idle. Having mentioned the elements that were brought forth together, it goes into no further detail in mentioning the rest but simply says, "Heaven and earth and all

15. Gn 2.1. Chrysostom, like the LXX translators before him, is not distracted from the unity of the account by the medieval division of the material into chapters.

their array were completed," referring by this means to everything on earth and in heaven.

(15) The earth's array, you see, is what is produced from it, the growth of plants, (88c) the harvest of fruits, the fruits of the trees, and all other things with which the Creator arrayed it; likewise the heaven's array is sun, moon, the variety of the stars, and everything else created in its midst. Hence, Sacred Scripture in mentioning heaven and earth included the whole of creation under those elements. "God completed on the sixth day," the text says, "the works he had done."[16] Notice how it says the same thing twice over so that we might learn all the works of creation were done up to the sixth day. The text says, remember, "He completed on the sixth day the works he had done, and on the seventh day he rested from all the works he had done."

(16) What is the meaning of that verse, "On the seventh day he rested from all the works he had done"? Notice how Sacred Scripture narrates everything in human fashion even out of considerateness to us. (88d) I mean, it would not have been possible for us in any other way to understand anything of what was said had not such considerateness been thought fitting. The text says, remember, "On the seventh day God rested from all the works he had done." It says he stopped creating and bringing from non-being into being; he had produced everything he had to, after all, and had created the being destined to enjoy it. "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it for the reason that on that day he rested from all the works God had begun to do."[17] You see, when he stopped creating, he had out of his own loving kindness brought forth at his own command everything he had intended, and had brought creation to a close on the sixth day; there was nothing else he intended to produce on the seventh day for the reason that everything he intended had been fulfilled.

(17) Hence, in order that this day too might have some dis-

16. Gn 2.2. The Heb., in fact, strangely reads "seventh" here; but later versions, including the LXX, regarded it as an error.

17. Gn 2.3.

tinction and not seem to bear some inferiority (89a) through the fact that nothing was created then, he conferred a blessing on it. "God blessed the seventh day," the text says, "and sanctified it." So what does that mean—the rest were not blessed? Of course they were, the text says, but for them it was enough, instead of any blessing, to have created things brought forth each time; hence, whereas in their case it did not say, "He blessed them," in the case of the seventh alone it did say so and added, "and sanctified it." What is the meaning of "He sanctified it"? He set it apart. Then, to teach us the reason for saying "He sanctified it," Sacred Scripture added, "for the reason that on that day he rested from all the works God had begun to do." Already at this point from the outset God provides us with instruction in a cryptic manner, teaching us that he set aside (89b) the whole of one day in the cycle of the week and marked it off for the performance of spiritual works.

(18) In other words, this is the reason why the Lord, after completing all the works of creation in six days, bestowed blessing on the seventh and consecrated it—for the reason of his resting on that day from his works which he had begun to do. But once again at this stage I detect a mighty swell of ideas overwhelming you, and I have no wish to pass them by thoughtlessly. Instead, I want to make you too sharers in these spiritual riches. What, then, is the question that arises for us at this point? While Sacred Scripture in this passage says that God rested from his works, in the Gospels Christ says, "My father is at work up until now and I am at work."[18] Does there not seem from the sequence of the expressions to be some contradiction in what is said? Perish the thought: there is nothing contradictory (89c) in the contents of Sacred Scripture. You see, in saying at this point that God rested from his works, Scripture teaches us that he ceased creating and bringing from non-being into being on the seventh day, whereas Christ, in saying that "my father is at work up until now and I am at work," reveals his unceasing care for us: he calls "work"

18. Jn 5.17.

the maintenance of created things, bestowal of permanence on them, and governance of them through all time. If this wasn't so, after all, how would everything have subsisted, without the guiding hand above directing all visible things and the human race as well? If anyone in a spirit of great gratitude has a mind to survey everything, detail by detail, done for our benefit each day by the Creator of all things, you would find an abyss of loving kindness. (89d) I mean, what reasoning or what imagination would arrive at the unspeakable goodness which he displays for the race of human beings, making the sun rise on the evil and the good, sending rain upon just and unjust,[19] and bestowing every other kind of good?

(19) Perhaps we have prolonged the sermon more than is necessary; this has not been done idly or to no purpose but (so that) those absent may learn through you how much loss they have incurred by depriving themselves of spiritual teaching on account of bodily nourishment. Lest, however, their despondency be aggravated, demonstrate your fraternal benevolence in their regard by conveying to them what has been said by us; this will, after all, be a sign of your genuine love. I mean, if people who do this in the case of material food (90a) by keeping tidbits from the table for their friends thus display a great sign of love, how much more does this behavior in the case of spiritual things win us great commendation, resulting as it does, after all, in our benefit as well. You see, the man who shows concern for teaching his neighbor does not so much do him a favor as reap a reward for himself; he gains a double benefit, enjoying a greater reward at God's hands and also, through the teaching he endeavors to give his brother, being reminded of it himself and renewing in his own mind the memory of what was said in the sermon. Accordingly, with an eye to your own profit , don't begrudge your brethren; instead, in this case let them learn from you what has been told you by us. But in case they come to rely on your charity in future to be taught these things, lead them to us and persuade them that partaking of bodily nourishment is no obstacle to

19. Cf. Mt 5.45.

spiritual teaching; (90b) on the contrary, any time must be considered suitable for discourse on spiritual topics.

(20) If we have a precise realization of this, we will be able while relaxing at home, both before eating and after eating, to take the Scriptures in our hands and gain benefit from them and provide spiritual nourishment for our soul.[20] You see, as the body has need of material nourishment, likewise, too, the soul needs daily reminders and spiritual nourishment so that it may be strengthened and thus able to resist the rebellion of the flesh and the constant battle waged within us to reduce our soul to servitude if we are disposed to drop our guard even for a short space of time. Hence the inspired author David called that person blessed who gave time to the law of the Lord day and night,[21] and blessed Moses (90c) in his instruction of the Jewish people taught them in these words: "When you have eaten and drunk, and taken your fill, give your mind to the Lord your God."[22] Do you see how it is especially appropriate after the enjoyment of food to set a spiritual meal for yourself lest the soul, after satiety of bodily food, should lose its zest and fall into some disaster and make way for the wiles of the devil, who is always looking for an opportunity and anxious to deliver us a blow at the critical moment? Again, in another place this same author said: "Whether sleeping or rising be mindful of the Lord your God."[23] Do you see how it never becomes us to drive this awareness from our soul, but rather to have it engraven on our conscience; we should be constantly on the alert and never allow ourselves respite, but rather remain sober and watchful in the knowledge of the fury of the one bearing hostility against us; we should repel his attacks (90d) and never neglect our spiritual nourishment. This, after all, is the secret of our salvation, our spiritual riches, our security. If we defend ourselves in this way day

20. Whatever the level of sophistication of Chrysostom's congregation, he has high expectations of their religious spirit and the temper of the "domestic Church," as we have noted above at Homily 6, note 18 in reference to Bible study groups. See also Introduction 11.

21. Ps 1.2.

22. A paraphrase of Dt 8.10–14.

23. Cf. Dt 6.7.

by day, through reading, through listening, through spiritual discourse,[24] we will be able to keep ourselves unharmed and render the devil's wiles ineffectual, and thus have the good fortune to reach the kingdom of heaven, thanks to the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

24. This, in a nutshell, is Chrysostom's formulation of the ways in which the Spirit touches the Christian—"through reading, through listening, through spiritual discourse."

HOMILY 11

On the theme that it is necessary to place great store by virtue and to imitate the saints, who while being of the same nature as ourselves live up to its precise obligations; and that sloth on our part will have no excuse.

AM AWARE THAT in these past days I have challenged your thinking with some quite profound notions, (91a) hence today I intend to put to you a simpler instruction. You see, just as the body wasted by fasting needs a slight respite so that once more to the same degree it may gird itself for the rigors of fasting at the prompting of a renewed enthusiasm, so too the soul needs to stop and rest. After all, you can't always be straining or always resting; instead, you must do one at this time, the other at that time, and in this fashion regulate the condition of the soul and the impulses of the body. I mean, just as unremitting tension leads to wearing out through effort and to collapse, so, too, constant resting brings on sloth. You could see this happening in the case both of the soul and of the body. Accordingly, moderation in all things is excellent.[1]

(2) This very thing the God of all teaches us, even through the very creatures he produced for our sustenance. (91b) To help you grasp this, let us take the example of the day and the night—I mean light and darkness. You see, when he determined the day for the labor of the human race, on the one hand, and, on the other, the dark of night for their rest and pause from toil, he set measures and limits to each, with the result that we all enjoy the benefit from this arrangement. As

1. A lesson learnt by bitter experience in Chrysostom's case, as we have seen (cf. Homily 10, note 6).

proof that the light is, after all, the appropriate time for the day's labor, listen to David's words: "People will go off to their work and their labor until evening."[2] He well said "until evening," since with the onset of evening light disappears: darkness falls to put the human race to sleep, gives rest to the weary body and repose to all its senses, and, just like an excellent nurse, refreshes all the faculties (91c) from labor and effort by the care it provides. But when the period of night is completed, the arrival of the sun takes effect and awakens us: it provides our refreshed senses with an encounter with the sun's rays and leads us to embrace our customary employment with fresh and vital enthusiasm.

(3) You can see this happening also in the seasons of the year: spring takes over from winter, and in the same way autumn succeeds the passing of summer, so that our bodies may find relief with the alternation of the mingling of the air, without, on the one hand, perishing through being frozen with ice beyond the normal, or, on the other hand, melting with excessive heat under the ferocity of summer. Accordingly, he ensures that we are adjusted to winter by the coming of autumn, and to summer by spring.

(4) And if you had a mind to survey everything else with a right mind, you would find (91d) in all created things a certain order and reason, nothing being done idly or to no purpose. Likewise in the case of the plants springing from the earth you would notice it: the earth doesn't produce them all at once, nor is the one time suited to tending the plants growing from it; instead, the farmer knows the appropriate time, having learnt it from God's evident design, and he realizes when he must sow the seed, when plant the trees and the vine in the earth's bosom, when sharpen the sickle for harvesting, when pick the fruit of the vine and cut the bunches of grapes, and at what time pick the fruit of the olive trees. (92a) And if you wanted to study everything in detail, you would find great wisdom also in people tilling the soil. And this can be seen not only on land but also at sea, where it is in fact possible to ob-

2. Ps 104.23.

serve in turn a remarkable wisdom of another kind: the pilot knows when he must launch the ship, sail it out of harbor, and cross the sea. Most of all in these men of the sea you can observe the great understanding which the wisdom of God conferred on the human race: people travelling the highways have no such precise knowledge of directions as these sailors who make their way safely on the waters. Hence Scripture too is amazed at God's surpassing wisdom and says of him, "The one who provides a path in the sea and a way through the raging billows."[3] What human reasoning is able to achieve this level of perception? (92b) Likewise in the matter of consumption of human food you would find things arranged on the same pattern: the Lord regales us with different food according to each time and each season of the year; and like a perfect nurse the earth presents us with these things from herself, in obedience to the Creator's command.

(5) Lest, however, I prolong this point further, you can summarize all the rest for yourself in your good sense. Scripture says, remember, "Give wise people but an opportunity, and they will become wiser."[4] I mean, this point can be seen not only in the matter of our food but also in regard to that of the brute beasts. And you could, if you wanted, from a study of many other things learn the unspeakable wisdom of God the master craftsman, and his surpassing goodness, and how by a definite design he produced each thing created. (92c) Accordingly, at this holy season of Lent, too, you will find the very same design now made for us. I mean, just as on the highways there are stopping places and lodgings, enabling travellers to rest from their weariness, recover from their distress and thus resume their journey, at sea, too, there are coasts and shores and harbors, enabling there also the seafarers to find a little respite after running before great billows and taking the brunt of the gales and thus resume their voyage. Now too in just the same way, at the holy season of Lent, those who have undertaken the course of fasting are granted by the Lord a short rest of these two days in the week, like

3. Wis 14.3. 4. Prv 9.9.

resting places and lodgings, or coasts and shores and harbors, so that we should rest the body a little from the rigors of fasting and comfort the soul, (92d) and once more after the passage of these two days resume the same way with enthusiasm, making a journey that is pleasant and advantageous.[5]

(6) So come now, since today is a day of rest, let us too encourage you, dearly beloved, to protect carefully the gains you have made from fasting, so that after resting a little you may add further to your earlier gains and thus little by little store up for yourselves great resources; in this way you will present yourselves at the day of the Lord and bring safely to the harbor of the holy festival your rich spiritual cargo. You see, just as everything created by the Lord has been created by a certain design (as the Word reveals and the proof of experience teaches us) and fulfils a necessary purpose, so too it is proper that what is done by us not be done idly or to no purpose but for the benefit and (93a) advantage of our salvation.

(7) After all, if people engaged in secular affairs never risk beginning an enterprise without first giving careful thought to the gain likely to accrue from it, much more is it proper for us to follow that procedure, not passing heedlessly by the days of fasting, but examining our conscience, scrutinizing our thinking, and considering what we have done right on this day and what on that day, what interest we have acquired for the future, and how much improvement we have achieved in our passions. You see, if we were unlikely to manage our affairs in this way and take this kind of care of our soul, there would be no advantage to us from the fasting and abstinence we undergo, especially if we suffer by comparison with people showing so much zeal for making money. (93b) I mean, each of them you would find letting no single day pass without adding something to what they already possess and never reaching satiety; instead, the more their possessions grow, so much the more is their zeal and enthusiasm heightened. So, if

5. Evidently in the church of Antioch (as generally in the ancient East, Chrysostom's editors note) the Lenten fast was relaxed on two days of the week. Perhaps the fact that this sermon was delivered on one such day accounts for its complete departure from the Gn text.

in the case where zeal is fruitless and concern for possessions often causes great harm to the salvation of our soul there is evidence of so much attention, how much more ought we not exert ourselves where great advantage stems from zeal, the gain beyond telling, and the yield infinite? In the former case, after all, great uncertainty accompanies all those gains, money-making being a risky business, not simply because at the moment of death whatever remains here below brings no advantage to the one amassing it, but also because, while the money remains here, (93c) one must go to face a very rigid accounting for it. It also frequently happens that even before death, despite all those efforts and struggles and difficulties, which dealing in money brings upon one like a storm, the person possessing great wealth of possessions suddenly becomes poorer than the poorest of the poor. This you can see happening daily, whereas in the matter of spiritual resources there is never anything like that to be feared: they are certain and free of risk, and the more we gain of them, the greater the reason for confidence we are given by them.

(8) I beg you, therefore, while we have time, let us bring zeal to the task of gaining spiritual resources, at least equal to that of those other people, (93d) and let us never cease giving our attention to that task, by doing some good deed, or by putting to flight through great vigilance some troublesome passion, so that we may have the security of a good conscience and enjoy the immense satisfaction which that brings. After all, we must not seek simply to be present here day after day, listen continually to the same matters and go fasting for the whole of Lent. I mean, if we were unlikely to gain anything from regular attendance here and the daily instruction,[6] and to carry off something useful for the soul from the period of fasting, this would not simply be of no benefit to us but would

6. It seems from such remarks that Chrysostom's congregation attended these Homilies daily (with two exceptions, cf. nt. 5) during Lent, perhaps before Lent, and (to judge from Homily 33)) well after Lent. They seem to function separately from the Eucharist, and just as well: the homilies are not brief, and they tend to get lengthier as Chrysostom goes on. See Introduction 8,11.

prove an occasion of heavier condemnation for remaining the same though enjoying such care and attention: the angry person not becoming meek and mild, the ill-tempered not changed into someone gentle, (94a) the envious not making themselves well-disposed, the miser not rescued from that passion to turn towards almsgiving and the relief of the poor, the unbridled not becoming temperate, the seeker after empty glory not learning to despise it and look for true glory, nor the one slow to love the neighbor undergoing a change of heart so as to learn not simply to be no worse than the tax collectors ("If you love those who love you," Scripture says, remember, "what improvement are you making? Don't even the tax collectors do that?"[7]) but to correct one's thinking, look kindly on one's enemies and show much love for them.

(9) If we don't get the better of those passions and the others rising within us while attending here daily, enjoying constant instructions, (94b) taking advantage of such teaching and getting help from fasting, what excuse is there for us? What defense can we make? After all, tell me, I beg you: if you saw your child going each day to school and gaining nothing from it in all that period of time, surely you wouldn't take that lying down? Wouldn't you take the rod to the child and blame the teacher as well? If you then learnt that everything had been done by the teacher for his part and nothing omitted, whereas the child's sloth was established as the cause of everything, wouldn't you transfer all your displeasure to the child and acquit the teacher of any guilt? Well, that's exactly what is the situation here: by an arrangement, as it were, of God's grace, we summon you daily like spiritual children to this school (94c) and present to you salutary teaching. We preach not the things that come from our own mind but the teachings vouchsafed us by the Lord through the Holy Scriptures, proclaiming them publicly and making them resound constantly. So if, despite our display of utter zeal and vigilance, and our conduct of you each day along the way of vir-

7. A collation of Mt 5.46–47, either from Chrysostom's own NT text or for making his point more directly.

tue, you persist in the same faults, think how great our shame will be and your condemnation, not to put too fine a point on it. You see, even if we are proved guiltless on the score of neglecting nothing to do with your edification, yet because we are concerned for your salvation we cannot accept this situation unfeelingly. The teacher, too, when he notices his student reaping no benefit from all his efforts, not infrequently laments and regrets it (94d) to see his labors gone for nought.

(10) I am saying this now, not to grieve you, dearly beloved, but to awaken you and put you on the alert so that it won't be all to no purpose that you torment the body with fasting, or fruitlessly and in vain that you pass the days of the holy season of Lent. Why mention the days of Lent when, to be sure, we ought not let slip by one single day in the whole of our life, if at all possible, without storing up for ourselves spiritual gain, either through prayer, or confession, or almsgiving, or some other spiritual practice? I mean, if a man of such quality and stature as Paul, who heard those ineffable words which no one to this day has knowledge of, cried out at the top of his voice, "Daily I die—yes, for the pride I take in you,"[8] to teach us that he kept exposing himself to danger for that good cause in such a way as (95a) to come close to death each day, and that what nature could not sustain (all of us, after all, being liable to death without exception) his utter singleness of purpose achieved for him, especially as the loving God further kept a watchful eye on him for the salvation of others—if, then, that man, distinguished for such feats, with the appearance of an angel on earth, as it were, daily exerted himself to achieve some gain, to take issue with the dangers of fighting for the truth, and to amass for himself spiritual resources without letting up, what excuse would we have to offer for not simply being strangers to right-doing but also being subject to deficiencies of such a kind that one alone would suffice to cast us into the very depths of ruin, and for showing no zeal at all, at least for setting all this to rights? But when the same person is frequently discovered guilty not simply of one weakness (95b)

8. 1 Cor 15.31.

but many, being ill-tempered, or intemperate, or greedy, or envious, or hot-headed, with no intention of reforming or of turning to deeds of virtue, what hope of salvation is there in the final analysis?

(11) I say this to you, and will not cease telling you, so that each of my listeners may adopt the appropriate remedy from what I have been saying, may quickly become anxious to be cured of those troublesome passions and return to health, as well as to render themselves accustomed to the practice of virtue. To draw a comparison with people suffering bodily ailments: if the patient were reluctant, despite the doctor's administering the drugs innumerable times, to let the healing power of the drugs take effect but instead often proved to be unco-operative after the doctor's attentions, showed no capacity for pain, rejected the treatment and got no benefit from it, no right-minded person would blame the doctor, (95c) who had done everything possible. Well, in exactly the same way in our case, too, have we for our part taken pains to administer the medicine coming from spiritual teaching, while your response has evidently been to put up with the distress, to benefit from the treatment, to be cured of the disease and return to true health. In this way, you know, you will gain a keen awareness of your own well-being, while we get no little boost to our confidence, seeing how people formerly ill have returned so rapidly to good health.

(12) So, I beg you, let each of you show interest now at least, even if not in the past, to excise from the soul whatever blemish you have perceived to be troubling you more than other passions, and by recourse to pious thinking as though by some spiritual sword rid yourself of that passion. God, you see, has given us the power of thinking that is adequate and capable, if we were prepared (95d) to ponder a little, of subduing each of the passions rising within us. For this reason the grace of the Spirit has left written for us in the pages of the sacred writings the lives and conduct of all holy people so that we might learn all the deeds of virtue they performed, people of the same nature as ourselves, and that we might not be lazy in the practice of virtue. Was not blessed Paul of the same

nature as ourselves? I mean, for this man I have an intense regard, and hence I do not cease bringing him constantly to mind;[9] fixing my eyes on his soul as though on some exemplary model, I marvel at his control of passion, the eminence of his manly spirit, the ardor of his love for God; and the realization comes to me that one man set his mind on achieving in his person all that multitude of virtues, whereas each of us perhaps hasn't even the inclination, let alone the achievement. So who (96a) will snatch us from inescapable punishment in view of the fact that someone sharing our nature, subject to the same passions and beset with such periods of difficulty—daily man-handled, so to say, tortured and swept off by public consent at the hands of opponents of his preaching, people who often thought him to be dead and thus eventually, as though translating thought into action, left him for dead—which of us will be found to give evidence of such a degree of virtue, being, as we are, so full of faults and to such an extent victims of such indifference?

(13) In case, however, you hear only from my lips the achievements of this blessed man and his manly spirit which he daily demonstrated in the cause of his preaching about religion, you ought to listen to his own words. (96b) You remember when he felt compelled, on account of the deceit of the false 'apostles,' to give an account of himself; it was so worrying and repulsive a thing for him that he shrank back and had no wish to publicize these details—in fact, he was even led to refer to himself as a blasphemer and a persecutor. Since, however, he recognized the great need, for the sake of stopping the mouths of the imposters, to give some little encouragement to his disciples, he took the following line after saying many other things: "Whatever anyone else was bold enough to do—I'm stupid to say so—I was bold enough,

9. How true this is, the text of almost every homily makes clear. Biographers of Chrysostom could easily relate the fellow-feeling Chrysostom had for Paul to a mutual impatience with half measures and (eventually) an experience of the afflictions that apostleship brings. A glance at the Scriptural quotations in this volume will reveal Chrysostom's fondness for quoting the Pauline letters, matched only by Matthew's Gospel and the Psalms. See Introduction 18.

too."[10] Do you notice the attitude of this religious man, how he refers to that action not simply as boldness but as stupidity, thus teaching us never to parade what we've done idly and without need, if no one is pressing us—should there by chance be any of us found responsible for some good deed. "Whatever anyone else was bold enough to do—I'm stupid to say so—I was bold enough, too"—that is to say, when I see a case of great need, (96c) I have it in mind to be bold and to be guilty of an instance of stupidity. "They are Hebrews? so am I; they are Israelites? so am I; they are the seed of Abraham? so am I."[11] On the basis of these claims, he says, they have a great opinion of themselves; let them not think we lag behind, being after all party to the same claims ourselves. Then he added, "They are ministers of Christ? (I speak like a fool) I am more than that."[12]

(14) See in this case, I ask you, dearly beloved, the virtue of this blessed man's soul: since he called what was done by him boldness and stupidity as well, despite his being forced into the need to do it, he did not stop short at the above words. Instead, since he was on the point of showing that he surpassed those people by a great margin lest anyone think he was saying all this out of conceit, he once more calls what was done by him stupidity, as though to say: It is not lost on me (96d) that the thing I'm doing gives offense to many people, and that doesn't become me; but extreme need forces me into doing it—so forgive me (he says) the words of folly I'm speaking. Let us measure up even to a shadow of this great man, carrying as we do such a load of sins to weigh us down. Often, if we manage to achieve some tiny good deed, we prove incapable of keeping it in the recesses of our mind, but from a desire to chase after people's good opinion we strut about and parade it before them, depriving ourselves of the reward due from God all because of this untimely vanity. This blessed man, on the contrary, wasn't guilty of anything of that sort. What was true in his case? He said, "They are ministers of

10. 2 Cor 11.21. 11. Ib.22.
12. Ib.23.

Christ? (I speak like a fool) I am more than that;" then and only then he brings forward the achievements to which the false 'apostles' had nothing to show in response. How could they, being, as they were, opponents of the truth, (97a) guilty of everything possible to impede the preaching of religion, and upsetting the minds of those settled in the faith?

(15) So, after saying, "I am more than that," he falls to enumerating the achievements of his manly spirit, and says: "In difficulties to an extraordinary degree, under blows beyond measure, facing death not infrequently." What is this you say? Remarkable and beyond belief is what you have to say. I mean, can you face death more than once? Yes, he says, even if it is not so much actual experience as in the mind—to teach us that he exposed himself unceasingly to such dangers threatening him with death on account of his preaching, but the grace of God protected the athlete in the very midst of these dangers so that great benefit came to his disciples from him. "Facing death not infrequently," he says; "at the hands of Jews I five times received forty lashes bar one, thrice was I scourged with rods, once stoned, (97b) thrice was I shipwrecked, I spent a day and a night in the depths of the sea, in journeyings often, at risk from rivers, at risk from brigands, at risk from fellow Jews, at risk from pagans, at risk from false brethren, at risk in cities, at risk in the wide open spaces, at risk at sea."[13] Let us not, dearly beloved, pass these words by heedlessly: each of them taken singly gives us a clue to a vast ocean of experiences. I mean, he didn't just casually say one journeying but "In journeyings often," not a single risk from rivers "many different risks"—and all he endured with great bravery. After all this he goes on to say: "Suffering trials and tribulations, sleepless nights more often than not, hunger and thirst, frequent lack of food, cold and nakedness, not to mention other problems."[14]

(16) Notice further another vast ocean of difficulties opened

13. 1b.25–26, with a logical rearrangement of our accepted NT text, promoting false brethren in the order.

14. 1b.27–28.

up to us. In saying, "Not to mention other problems," he hinted that those (97c) omitted were probably more numerous than those mentioned. Nor did he stop at that: instead, he goes on to teach us the troubles and disturbances he endured when he says, "What brought me trouble every day—the care of all the churches."[15] Notice as well this further achievement sufficient of itself, had it happened to be his only achievement, to lead him to the very pinnacle of virtue: "the care of all the churches," not one, or two, or three, but all the churches throughout the world. In other words, whatever parts of the earth the sun traverses in spreading its rays, this blessed man had that as his care and responsibility. See his breadth of soul? see his greatness of mind? Moreover, all this is implied by that phrase he takes as read, as you might say; he simply goes on, "Who suffers weakness without my suffering it too? Who is scandalized without my being inflamed too?"[16] Goodness me, what loving concern this man shows! (97d) how much sleepless anxiety, how much care! What mother endures as much anguish when her child is plagued with fever, lying on a bed of pain, as this blessed man suffered in greater degree for those suffering weakness in whatever place, and was upset about those being scandalized? I mean, consider, if you would, the significance of the expression. He did not say, Who is scandalized without my being sorry too, but, my being inflamed, suggesting to us the intensity of the pain, as though revealing himself set alight by that incident and burning over the thought of those people enduring scandal.

(17) I know I have prolonged the instruction to great length, despite my promise to be brief today so that you might get a little respite from the rigors of fasting. But somehow when I come face to face with the wealth of achievement of this holy man, I lose control of my tongue as though swept away by an irresistible flood. (98a) So, I'll finish the sermon at this point, and urge you, my dear people, to be constantly mindful of this

15. In quoting Paul on his "trouble," Chrysostom is reading *episustasis* for the *epistasis* of our accepted text.

16. Ib.29.

man and consider unremittingly that, while sharing the same nature as ourselves, subject to the same passions, practicing the lowly and poorly paid trade of tentmaker, turning up to work out of an intention and desire to devote himself to the labors virtue involves and make himself worthy to entertain the Holy Spirit, he enjoyed to a remarkable degree favor from on high. We therefore will meet no obstacle to the enjoyment of these same rewards provided we resolve to demonstrate these qualities ourselves. The Lord, after all, is generous, and "wishes all people to be saved and come to knowledge of truth."[17] So let us render ourselves worthy, (98b) and with lively enthusiasm set our sights on virtue if only at this late stage; let us give evidence of disciplining the passions within us, and so render ourselves suited for receiving the gift of the Spirit. May it be the good fortune of us all to be judged worthy of this gift, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

17. 1 Tm 2.4.

HOMILY 12

On the sequel to creation: "This is the book about the origins of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day God made heaven and earth."[1]

OME NOW, TODAY let us fulfil our promise and move on to the accustomed instruction, connecting what we are about to say with the thread of the sermons given so far. (98c) You remember, of course, that when we were all set on one or two occasions and quite intent on following that course, concern for our brethren changed the direction of our speech towards encouragement of them. You see, sometimes those of the brethren who are ailing, who habitually absent themselves from this spiritual gathering, and who spoil the joy coming to them from this holy festival, we persuade by much encouragement and advice not to cut themselves off for long from Christ's flock nor be misled beyond this spiritual fold by, on the one hand, associating with us in word and name while, on the other hand, following in fact the Jews, those seated in darkness and attracted to a lantern despite the illumination of the sun of justice.[2] (98d) At other times we have urged the uninitiated members of this congregation[3] to respond to their spiritual calling by shaking off all drowsiness and all sloth, calling on a lively desire and heightened enthusi-

1. Gn 2.4.

2. Chrysostom has often been charged with anti-semitism, and he does warn his congregation against Jewish positions. His biographers defend him by highlighting the influence held in Antioch by Jews at the time. Doubtless also his regard for Paul would encourage him to comparisons of this type deriving from 2 Cor 3.

3. The catechumens, preparing during Lent for baptism, are thus warned against *rhathumia*, "indifference."

asm to make themselves ready for receiving the royal gift and to long for the one bringing them the gift of forgiveness of their sins and providing them with countless good things in abundance.

(2) So, now that we have displayed the care that becomes us in regard to those who are mistaken about the feast of Easter, and who bring great harm to themselves by the little attention they think it deserves, and now that we have applied an appropriate remedy to their wound and have delivered the due admonition to the uninitiated, it would be in order at long last to spread before all of you alike, today, the spiritual banquet, since we have taken issue with the most urgent of the ailments and have dealt adequately with them. You can appreciate the comparison: if before (99a) attending to our brethren we had continued on from where we left off, forsaking the task of encouraging them and overlooking their difficulties, in all likelihood someone would have reproached us for passing up an opportunity; so, as things are now, since nothing has been omitted that lay within our power but on the contrary we have delivered words of instruction, we have gone to some expense, we have sown the seed in this spiritual soil, it is in order once again to open up for your consideration the reading from blessed Moses so that you may reap some benefit from it and thus make your way home. So, to find out what it is, let us listen carefully.

(3) The text says: "This is the book about the origins of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day God made heaven and earth, before any grass of the field appeared on the earth or any crop of the field sprouted. (99b) God, you see, had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no human being to till the soil; a spring used to flow out of the ground and water the whole face of the earth."[4] Notice again, I ask you, the insight of this remarkable author, or rather the teaching of the Holy Spirit. I mean, after narrating to us detail by detail all the items of creation and going through the

4. Gn 2.4–6.

works of the six days, the creation of human beings and the authority granted them over all visible things, now he sums them all up in the words, "This is the book about the origins of heaven and earth when they were created." It is worth enquiring at this point why it is he calls it the book of heaven and earth in view of the fact that the book contains many other things and teaches us about a greater number of matters—about the virtue of good people, about God's loving kindness and the considerateness he demonstrated in regard both (99c) to the first-formed human being and to the whole human race, and about a lot of other things it would be impossible to list right now. Don't be surprised, dearly beloved; after all, it is the custom with Holy Scripture not to describe everything to us in detail in every case but rather to begin with a summary of related items and to leave further detail to be considered by right-minded listeners as they take in what is said.

(4) So that you may learn this is the case, I will make it clear from the very verses just now read. What I refer to is this: notice Sacred Scripture taught us in detail in the preceding verses the creation of everything, but now, instead of mentioning them all, it says: "This is the book about the origins of heaven and earth when they were created, on the day God made heaven and earth," and so on. Do you see how it confines the whole account to heaven and earth, leaving us to get from them a sweeping view of all the other things? (99d) I mean, when it said heaven and earth, it included everything together in those words, both things on earth and things in heaven. So, just as in its account of created things it doesn't mention them all one by one but gives a summary of related items and makes no further attempt to describe them to us, so too it called the whole book the book about the origins of heaven and earth, even though it contains many other things, evidently leaving us to work out from the reference to these two that all visible things are of necessity contained in this book, both those in heaven and those on earth.

(5) "On the day God made heaven and earth," the text goes on, "before any grass of the field appeared on the earth or any crop of the field sprouted, since God, you see, had not

sent rain on the earth, and there was no human being to till the soil; a spring (100a) used to flow out of the ground and water the whole face of the earth." Great is the treasure concealed in these brief words—hence the need for us to unfold the meaning of the text with great sagacity, under the guidance of God's grace, and to lead you to share in this spiritual wealth. The Holy Spirit, after all, in his foreknowledge of future events wishes to prevent anyone's being able to engage in controversy later on, and in opposition to Sacred Scripture to set notions from their own reasoning against the dogmas of the Church; so now again, after teaching us the order of created things—what was created first and what second—and the fact that from the earth in compliance with the Lord's word and direction the earth produced plants and was stirred into pangs of fertility, without depending on the sun for assistance (how could it, after all, the sun not yet being created?) nor on the moisture from showers, nor on human labor (100b) (human beings, after all, not having been brought forth), accordingly once again he makes mention of all the items one by one so as to stop the unbridled tongue of people spoiling to make a show of their shamelessness.[5]

(6) What in fact does he say? "On the day God made heaven and earth before any grass of the field appeared on the earth or any crop of the field sprouted. God, you see, had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no human being to till the soil; a spring used to flow out of the ground and water the whole face of the earth." He intends to convey the fact that by his word and direction things not existing previously were brought into existence, and what had not been, came into

5. Comment has already been made on Chrysostom's relatively uncritical style of commentary (see Introduction 16); and, all things considered, we are not surprised that he is in some difficulty at this point accounting for a second creation narrative, not having the advantage of a later age's source criticism. His task is made the more difficult by the apparent rationalizing of the two accounts by the LXX version, which has evidently ignored the change of name of God to Yahweh in the Hebrew and a further significant alteration of order from creation of "heaven and earth" (1.1) to making of "earth and heaven" (2.4b)—items that receive much notice in modern commentaries on the Heb. text as evidence of different narrative strands.

view all of a sudden. "Crop" means what springs from the soil: when it says "crop" it means plants of all kinds. And in teaching us about showers, again Sacred Scripture added, "God, you see, had not sent rain on the earth"—that is to say, no showers had so far been sent from on high. (100c) And after this it finally shows us that there was no dependence on human labor either: "There was no human being," it says, remember, "to till the soil"—as if to shout aloud and tell everyone coming later: Listen to this and learn how everything springing from the earth was produced, and don't think it was all due to the care of people working the soil, nor attribute its birth pangs of fertility to them but to the word and direction given it from the beginning by the Creator. All this happens that you may learn that there was no dependence on the assistance of the other elements for the growth of its plants; instead, what was required was the direction of the Creator.

(7) What is really remarkable and surprising is that the one who now by his own word awakens the earth to germination of so many plants and demonstrates his own power surpassing human reasoning, this same earth, heavy as it is (100d) and supporting such a huge universe on its back, he rested on the waters as foundation, as the inspired author says, "He who rests the earth on the waters as foundation."[6] What human reasoning could arrive at this design? I mean, when people build their houses and have in mind to sink foundations, they first dig a hole: if on reaching some depth they see a trace of dampness, they take every step to remove it all and only then sink the foundations. By comparison with this the Creator of all creates everything in a way contrary to humankind so that you may learn even from this his ineffable power and the fact that, when he wishes, the very elements can be seen to perform in a way contrary to their own abilities in compliance with the Creator's wishes.

(8) To make this subject clearer to you (101a) let us make you familiar with the preceding point and then pass on to the

6. Ps 136.6, in Chrysostom's individual text that reinforces his point better than Heb. or LXX.

next. You see, it is contrary to the nature of the waters to carry a heavy body in this way; and, again, it is foreign to the earth to take its position on such a foundation. Why do you marvel at this? After all, if you take it into your head to study each created thing, you will encounter the infinite power of the Creator and the fact that by his own will he governs all visible things. This, in fact, can be seen happening also in the case of fire: though it has the capacity to burn up, and it prevails over everything, consuming all material of stone, wood, iron and other bodies with ease, yet when the Creator so directed, it left untouched delicate and perishable bodies and, in fact, kept the children unharmed in the middle of the furnace.[7] Don't be surprised if it left these bodies untouched and if, in fact, this irrational element demonstrated (101b) the kind of restraint that cannot be described. You see, it did not so much as harm their hair; instead, it formed a circle around them and kept them inside it; the substance of the fire, as it were, responded in obedience, and in compliance with the Lord's direction it kept those excellent children safe and sound, so that they moved about in the furnace with such ease as though strolling through a meadow or garden. And, lest anyone think that what they saw was not a fire at work, the loving Lord for that purpose did not hamper its efficacy; instead, he allowed its burning qualities to remain active, rendering his servants proof against its harmful effect but ensuring that those who thrust them in might learn the extent of the power of the Lord of all: the fire showed its force against them, burning and consuming them as they stood outside the furnace while at the same time encircling the children inside.

(9) Do you see how, whenever the Lord wishes, (101c) each of the elements changes its properties into the very opposite? The Lord, you see, is also Creator, and he governs everything according to his own will. Do you want to see this very thing happening also in the case of the waters? Well, just as in the present case the fire refrained from harming the people right inside it, on the one hand, neglecting to exercise its own

7. Dn 3.

power, while, on the other hand, it exercised that power in the case of those who happened to be outside it, in like manner we will see the waters drowning some but giving way before others so that they crossed over in safety. Remember in this connection, I ask you, Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the people of the Hebrews, how the latter by the Lord's command and under the leadership of the great Moses crossed the Red Sea in this way as though across dry land, whereas the Egyptians with Pharaoh wanted to go the same way as the Hebrews, (101d) but were submerged and drowned.[8] Thus even the elements know how to respect the Lord's servants and to keep in check their own impulse.

(10) Let us hear an account of the number of times we have betrayed our own salvation through being hot-tempered, and angry, and a prey to the other passions through our indifference, and let us imitate the great obedience of these elements, irrational though they are, while we are endowed with the gift of reason. After all, if fire, which has such capacity to burn, which is so fierce, left untouched in that fashion delicate and perishable bodies, what allowance can be made for human beings not prepared to check their own rage despite the Lord's command and eliminate resentment against their neighbor? What is even worse is the fact that fire, while having this property—I mean, to burn—did not demonstrate this capacity, whereas the human being, a creature gentle, and rational, and mild, behaves in a manner contrary to its nature and through indifference (102a) casts itself in the mold of the wild beasts. Hence even Sacred Scripture, with these sorts of disturbing passions in mind, in many places applies the names of brutes and of wild beasts to those gifted with reason: sometimes it calls them dogs on account of their shameful and headstrong behavior—"Dumb dogs are they," it says, remember, "unable even to bark"[9]—at other times horses on account of their unbridled appetites—"They turned into rutting horses, each neighing after his neighbor's wife"[10]—at

8. Ex 14.
9. Is 56.10.
10. Jer 5.8.

other times asses for their folly and stupidity—"He has resembled the monsters that lack all intelligence," it says, remember, "and has become like them"[11]—at other times lions and leopards on account of their greed and rapacity, at other times serpents because of their deceit—"Poison of serpents," it says, "on their lips"[12]—whereas at other times it called them snakes and vipers on account of their venom and malice, as blessed John cried aloud in these words: "Snakes, brood of vipers, who has shown you how to flee from the wrath to come?"[13] (102b) And it adds other names appropriate to the various passions in the hope that eventually they may feel ashamed of this behavior and turn back to their true nobility, coming to terms with their true nature and giving the laws of God pride of place before their own passions to which through sloth they have given themselves up.

(11) But I don't know how I strayed from the thread of the sermon on to these matters. Come now, let us return at this late stage to the preceding point, and let us see what else this blessed author wants to teach us today. You see, after saying, "This is the book about the origins of heaven and earth," he presses on and describes further for us with great detail the creation of the human being. Since he had briefly said above, "God made the human being; in God's image he made them," he now says, "God shaped the human being from the dust of the earth, (102c) and breathed into him a breath of life; the human being became alive."[14] A mighty saying, giving rise to great wonderment, and beyond the limits of human understanding: "God shaped the human being," it says, "taking dust from the earth." Just as in the case of all the visible creatures I kept saying that the Creator of all performs everything in a manner contrary to human nature so as to demonstrate his ineffable power through this as well, so too in the case of the formation of the human being we will find this taking place. I mean, notice how he rested the earth on the waters, some-

11. Ps 49.13 in the LXX version, substantially different from the Heb.
12. Ps 140.3.
13. Mt 3.7, embellished for effect.
14. Gn 2.7.

thing human reasoning does not without faith succeed in accepting, and that whenever he wishes he succeeds in converting the properties of all things to their opposite, as we have shown. Well, this very same thing Sacred Scripture now reveals to us happening in the case of the formation of the human being as well: "God shaped (102d) the human being," it says, "taking dust from the earth."

(12) What is that you say? Taking dust from the earth he shaped the human being? Yes, it says; it did not simply say "earth" but "dust," something more lowly and substantial even than earth, so to say. You think the saying amazing and incredible; but if you recall who is the creator in this case, you will no longer withhold faith in the event but marvel at the Creator's power and bow your knee to it. If, on the other hand, you chanced to put your mind to these matters in light of the limitations of your powers of reason, you would likely get this strange idea into your head, namely, that a body could never be made from earth—a brick or a pot, yes, but never could such a body be made. Do you see that unless we take into account the Creator's power and suppress our own reasoning which betrays such limitations, we will be unable to accept the sublimity of the message? After all, the words require the eyes of faith, spoken as they are (103a) with such great considerateness and with our limitations in mind. You see, that very remark, "God shaped the human being, and breathed," is properly inapplicable to God; yet because of us and our limitations Sacred Scripture expresses it in that way, showing considerateness to us, so that, having been thought worthy of the considerateness, we might be enabled to arrive at that sublime level of thought.[15]

(13) "God shaped the human being," it says, "taking dust from the earth." Finally, from these words spring no little instruction in humility, as long as we are prepared to be alert to

15. Anthropomorphisms in the scriptural text represent for Chrysostom an eminent example of considerateness, *synkatabasis*, in view of our limitations, *astheneia*—while, on the other hand, they must not be allowed to undermine that correlative notion of his, divine transcendence. They are given to us to elevate our thinking and heighten our reverence, not lower it.

it. I mean, whenever we consider where our nature derived the beginning of its subsistence, even if we put our brains to it thousands of times, we are humbled and chastened, and in our efforts to plumb our being we learn to respect proper limits. For this reason, God, caring for our salvation, thus directed the tongue of the sacred writer for our instruction. (103b) You see, when Sacred Scripture said in its previous statement, "God made the human being; in God's image he made them," he gave him complete control of visible things lest out of ignorance of the composition of his own being he might conjure up inflated notions of his own importance and transgress the limits proper to him.

(14) Hence, when Scripture comes back to the point it teaches us also the manner of our composition and the beginning of our creation, and whence the first human being was produced and how it was produced. After all, into what depths of madness would we not have tumbled if, despite this teaching and despite the knowledge that the human being takes the beginning of its composition from the earth as do the plants and the irrational beings (though its formation and the bodiless being of the soul has given it a marked superiority, thanks to God's loving kindness, (103c) this constituting after all the basis of its rationality and its endowment with control over all creation),—if then with this knowledge this creature shaped from the earth had conjured up the notion of its equality with God owing to the serpent's deceit, and if the blessed author had been content with his first account and had not repeated himself in teaching us everything with precision,[16] into what depths of madness would we not have tumbled?

(15) The result is that we gain the greatest possible degree of instruction in philosophy from learning whence we derive the composition of our being from the very outset. "God shaped the human being," the text says, "taking dust from the earth, and breathed into him a breath of life." Since it was ex-

16. See note 5 above. To Chrysostom's mind, Moses gives a second creation account for that great scriptural virtue, "precision."

plaining to human beings who were unable to understand in any way other than we ourselves can understand, it employs this kind of concreteness of expression,[17] and intends also to teach us that the Lord's loving kindness intended that this creature shaped from the earth (103d) should have also a rational being by reason of a soul, by means of which this living thing emerged complete and perfect. "He breathed into him a breath of life," the text says; the creature shaped from the earth, it means, was endowed with this breath as a vital force, and this became the origin of the soul's being. At any rate, the text added: "The human being became alive." That shaped thing, that creature from the dust, received the breathing of the breath of life, and "it became alive," the text says. What is the meaning of "became alive"? Enjoying vital force, having limbs to its body that respond to this vital force and obey its will.

(16) But I have no idea how we upset that arrangement, and how such an onset of evil occurred as to oblige it to follow the bidding of the flesh, (104a) so that what should in the manner of a queen have presided and exercised rule we have unseated from her throne and forced to obey the pleasures of the flesh, ignorant as we are of its nobility and the degree of preeminence it has the good fortune to be accorded. I mean, think of the order of its formation, I ask you, and consider what this shaped thing was before the Lord's breathing which meant a breath of life for it and resulted in its becoming alive. Simply a lifeless shell, without vital force, and useful for nothing, so that its total make-up and its succession to such great esteem all stems from that action of breathing made upon it by God. Lest you think this happened from things already created at that time instead of from something that happens each day at the present time, consider, I ask you, how after the departure of the soul this body appears odious and unpleasant? (104b) How repulsive, how much reeking with stench, how marked by complete deformity this creature

17. See Homily 9, note 1 above for comment on Chrysostom's thinking on the concreteness, *pachutēs*, of biblical language.

that previously when it had the soul to conduct it was bright, graceful, marked by beauty of form, abounding with intelligence, enjoying great aptitude for the performance of good deeds.

(17) So, with this in mind, and realizing the nobility of our soul, let us be guilty of no behavior unworthy of it nor defile it with unfitting actions, subjecting it to the thrall of the flesh and showing so little appreciation and regard for what is so noble and endowed with such pre-eminence. After all, because of the soul's being, we who are intertwined with a body can, if we wish (104c) and under the influence of God's grace, strive against disembodied powers, can walk on earth as though coursing across heaven, and pass our lives in this manner, suffering no inferiority. How that can be, I will tell you. You see, when people prove, despite entanglement with a mortal body, to live the same life as those supernal powers, how will they not be deemed worthy of grace from God for keeping untarnished the soul's nobility, though subject to the body's necessities.

(18) Who could possibly prove, someone says, to be of such character? Quite likely this thing is thought unlikely by us because of the extreme paucity of our virtue. But if you are prepared to learn that this is not out of the question, consider, I ask you, those who have been pleasing to the Lord from the beginning up to the present time (104d) the mighty John, son of infertility, citizen of the desert; Paul, the world's teacher; and the whole series of saints, who happened to have the same nature as ourselves, subject to the same necessities of the body—and no longer consider the thing to be impossible, nor be apathetic where virtue is concerned, but accept such opportunities as the Lord leaves for laying hold of virtue with ease. Our loving Lord, you see, knowing the weakness of our purpose and our tendency to fall, has left us great remedies in the reading of the Scriptures so that we might constantly apply them to ourselves and recall the lives of those great and wonderful men. Thus we may be led to imitation and not neglect virtue, but (105a) rather avoid evil and do everything so

as not to prove ourselves unworthy of those unspeakably good people. May this be the good fortune of all of us, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 13

"The Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and placed in it the human creature he had formed."[1]

I SEE YOUR INSATIABLE interest, your great enthusiasm and eager attention, and the way you are all coming to spiritual teaching expectant and impatient. On the other hand, I am conscious of my own great inadequacy. (105b) Still, I am anxious to lay before you this mean and paltry table frequently, and in fact daily, trusting that you will readily receive what is said, stimulated as you are with your own enthusiasm. One can see this happening in the case of material nourishment: whenever guests come to dinner with keen appetite, they eat with great relish whatever is placed before them, no matter if the meal happens to be paltry and the host ungenerous—whereas when the diners have indifferent appetite, no matter if the meal is sumptuous and the menu varied, it is wasted on them since they can't do justice to the good things provided. Here today, however, your enthusiasm has in fact been enlivened through God's grace and the repast is a spiritual one; so we, too, are enthusiastic in speaking to you, knowing that we bring these divine teachings to attentive listeners.

(2) The farmer (105c) is like this, too: he gives the soil all the attention he is capable of—digging the furrows, hauling the plough, rooting out thorns—so when he finds the pasture rich and fertile, he sows the seed lavishly; buoyed up already with high hopes he counts the days to the sprouting of the crop, recalling the productivity of the land and expecting a harvest far in excess of the sowing. That is the way we behave,

1. Gn 2.8.

too: we see your enthusiasm increasing day by day, your interest blossoming, and your zeal bearing fruit. We have high hopes of you, and with greater enthusiasm and zeal ourselves we strive as far as we are able to contribute to the building up of your love, to God's glory and the pride of God's church.

(3) (105d) So come now, if you please, let us recall the few things said yesterday, and move on in turn to today's reading. We need to say what it was we were discussing yesterday, how far we got, and where we stopped. "God formed the human being, taking dust from the earth, and he breathed into him a breath of life; the human being became alive."[2] What I was saying before I will say now, and will not cease saying continually, that great and unspeakable is the kindness of the Lord of all creatures towards us men. He displayed great considerateness for the sake of our welfare, and bestowed great honor on this creature—namely, the human person—and made plain in words and deeds that he exhibits greater care of human beings than of other visible things. (106a) There is no reason why I should not presume on your goodness to explore the same theme today, too. For, just as with grains of incense, the more they are moved about with your fingers, the greater fragrance they give out, so it is with the Scriptures in our experience: the more you devote yourself to studying them, the more you are able to discover the treasure hidden in them, and thereby gain great and unspeakable wealth.[3]

(4) "God," it says, "formed the human being, taking dust from the earth. Do you notice straightway the difference in the way the sentence opens? In the case of all the other creatures blessed Moses taught us the manner of creation, saying, "God said, Let there be light , and there was light ;" "Let the firmament be made;" "Let the water be gathered together;" "Let the stars be made;" (106b) "Let the earth put forth a crop

2. Gn 2.7.

3. Reference has been made above (Homily 3, note 3) to the figures Chrysostom employs for the Scriptures and homilies upon them; and while patristic commentators like H. De Lubac have established there is little original in these figures, Chrysostom has obviously worked hard at his task to produce the series of them that introduce this homily.

of vegetation;" "Let the waters bring forth reptiles with living souls;" and "Let the earth bring forth a living thing." Do you see how they were all created by a word? Let us notice instead what it says in the case of the creation of human beings. "God formed the human being." Do you see how, by the considerateness shown in the words he uses on account of our limitations, it teaches us both the manner of the creation and the difference, and all but shows us (so to speak in human fashion) man being shaped by God's hands—as another author says, "Your hands made me, and formed me."[4]

(5) You see, if he had simply ordered that the human person spring out of the earth, then the object of the order would merely have been produced, would it not? Instead, for the purpose of communicating to us lasting teaching through the manner of creation (106c) to avoid an impression false to reality, everything is explained precisely in this way, and the text reads, "God formed the human being, taking dust from the earth."[5]

(6) Even in this detail notice the regard for us. I mean, he does not simply take some soil, but dust, the finest grains of soil, so to say, and this very dust of the earth by his own design he changed into the human kind of body. You see, just as he brought into being the very substance of the soil when it did not exist, so now, at will, he changed the dust from soil into body. At this it is good to exclaim what was said by blessed David, "Who will speak of the wonders of the Lord, and bring to our ears all his praises?"[6]—namely, that from dust he produced such a creature and elevated it to such eminence, and that he displays such marks of regard for it right from the outset, revealing in all this his own loving kindness. (106d)

4. Job 10.8.

5. Again (and again) Chrysostom's commentary on details of the text relates its precision to divine considerateness for human limitations for the sake of our salvation—his own synthesis and a beautiful theology of the Word. A modern commentator, interestingly, by contrast with Chrysostom and with a knowledge of Hebrew but perhaps not Chrysostom's theological depth, would rather comment on the play on words at this point between *'adam*, "man," and *'adama*, "soil."

6. Ps 106.2.

The text says, "He breathed into him a breath of life; the human being became alive."

(7) In this regard some senseless people, moved by their own reasoning, and having no regard for what is proper to God nor any appreciation of the considerateness revealed in the words, try to say that the soul comes from the substance of God. Such madness, such stupidity! What false paths has the devil prepared for those bent on following him! To realize it, consider how these paths lead in quite different directions. Some seize on a reading of the text, "He breathed," to say that souls come from the substance of God, whereas others on the contrary say they change into the substance of the worst of brute beasts. What could be worse than such folly? Since their reasoning is dulled, and (107a) they miss the true meaning of Scripture, they are like men blinded in the eyes of their mind, stumbling in various directions down cliffs: some accord the soul excessive esteem, others depress it unduly. Because if they wanted to assign a mouth to God on the score of Scripture's saying, "He breathed into him," they would have to equip him with hands too, since it says, "He formed the human being."

(8) Anyhow, in case by wanting to make a display of these people's stupidity we, too, find ourselves induced to utter unseemly remarks, let's have done with their folly and turn aside from such idiocy; let us follow the direction of Sacred Scripture in the interpretation it gives of itself,[7] provided we don't get completely absorbed in the concreteness of the words, but realize that our limitations are the reason for the concreteness of the language. (107b) Human senses, you see, would never be able to grasp what is said if they had not the benefit of such great considerateness.

7. Another sound hermeneutical principle of Chrysostom's, which he repeats shortly after in this homily. It is not confined to his thinking; a commentator, J.-M. Leroux, remarks: "Le principe n'est pas nouveau; il fait même partie des lois fondamentales de l'exégèse patristique, et on peut le recontrer en des termes presque identiques dans les écrits d'Origène et d'Augustin" ("Relativité et transcendance du texte biblique d'après Jean Chrysostome," *La Bible et Les Pères: Colloque de Strasbourg 1969* [Paris 1971] 72).

(9) So recognizing our limitations, and the fact that what is said refers to God, let us accept the words as equivalent to speaking about God; let us not reduce the divine to the shape of bodies and the structure of limbs, but understand the whole narrative in a manner appropriate to God. For the deity is simple, free of parts and shape; should we form an impression from ourselves and want to ascribe an arrangement of limbs to God, we would be in danger of falling into the irreverence pagans are guilty of. So when you hear Scripture saying, "God formed the human being," think of the same power as was responsible for "Let it be made;" likewise when you hear the sentence, "He breathed into him a breath of life," reason this way too, that just as he created the incorporeal beings, (107c) so he decided this body made from the dust should have a rational soul and be able to use a body's limbs. You see, this body created in the Lord's design was like an instrument needing someone to activate it, rather like a lyre that needs someone who can by his own skill and artistry raise a fitting hymn to the Lord through his own limbs, as though by the strings of the lyre. The text says: "He breathed into him a breath of life, and the human being became alive." What is the sense of that, "He breathed a breath of life"? The body made this way, it is saying, he wanted to have a living force and he so directed; this became for the creature a living soul—in other words, full of movement, with the ability to display its own skill through the movement of its limbs.

(10) Notice, too, in this account the difference between this wonderful creature of reason (107d) and the creation of the brute beasts. Regarding them, remember, it says, "Let the waters produce reptiles with living souls," and at once the living beings emerged from the waters; likewise in the case of the earth in the same terms: "Let the earth produce a living being." Not so, however, in the case of the human person: first its body is created from the dust, and afterwards the power of life is given to it, and this is the being of the soul. Accordingly Moses said about the beasts, "Its blood is its life."[8] But in the

8. Lv 17.11.

case of the human person its being is incorporeal and immortal, and has a great superiority over the body, to the same extent as incorporeal form surpasses the corporeal.

(11) Perhaps, however, someone may say: Why is it that, if the soul is more important than the body, the lesser is created first, and then the greater afterwards? Don't you see, dearly beloved, that even in the process of creation this very sequence is followed? (108a) That is to say, just as heaven and earth, the sun and moon, and everything else is created, including the brute beasts, and after all these the human person, the one destined to enjoy control of all of them, in the very same way in the actual creation of the human person the body is produced first and then the soul, greater though its importance is. The procedure is the same with the brute beasts: though they are destined to be useful in the service of human beings, they are created before them so that the ones intended to enjoy the use of these beasts will find them ready for service. So, too, the body is created before the soul, so that when the soul is produced according to God's ineffable wisdom, it will be able to display its own vital forces through the movement of its body.

(12) The text goes on: "The Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and placed in it the human being he had formed." When the Lord of all had demonstrated his characteristic loving kindness (108b) in creating the one for whom everything had been provided, and setting him in its midst, immediately he began to bestow on this human person deeds of kindness. "God," it says, "planted a garden in Eden in the east." Notice here, dearly beloved, that unless we take the words in a manner appropriate to God, we will inevitably be trapped in a deep pitfall. I mean, what would be likely to be said about this sentence, too, by those rash enough to interpret in human fashion everything said about God? "God planted a garden," it says. What does that mean, pray? did he have need of tools, and gardening, and every other skill to beautify the garden? Not at all. Rather, in this case too, we need to understand the word "planted" in this sense—namely, that he commanded a garden to be created on the earth so

that the human being he had produced should live in the garden. I mean, to prove that he created the garden for human beings, listen to Scripture itself saying, "God planted a garden in Eden (108c) in the east, and placed in it the human being he had formed."

(13) The reason blessed Moses inserted the name of the place in the text was that it would not be possible for those inclined to take things lightly to deceive the ears of the simple and say the garden was not on earth but in heaven, and dream up wild theories of that kind. You see, despite the use of such precision by Sacred Scripture, some people have not questioned the glib words of arrogant commentators and farfetched philosophy, even to the extent of denying Holy Writ and saying the garden was not on earth, giving contrary views on many other passages, taking a direction opposed to a literal understanding of the text, and thinking that what is said on the question of things on earth has to do with things in heaven. And, if blessed Moses had not used such simplicity of expression and such considerateness, the Holy Spirit (108d) directing his tongue, where would we not have come to grief? Sacred Scripture, though, whenever it wants to teach us something like this, gives its own interpretation, and doesn't let the listener go astray. On the other hand, since the majority of listeners apply their ears to the narrative, not for the sake of gaining some profit but for enjoyment, they are at pains to take note of things able to bring enjoyment rather than those that bring profit. So, I beg you, block your ears against all distractions of that kind, and let us follow the norm of Sacred Scripture.[9] And when, dearly beloved, you hear that "God planted a garden in Eden in the east," take the word "planted" in a sense appropriate to God, namely, that he commanded this happen; and, about the next phrase, believe that a garden came into being, and in that place that Scripture indicated. Not to believe in the contents (109a) of Sacred Scripture, and introduce instead other views from one's own reasoning, is in

9. Again the exhortation to follow the norm (*canōn* in Chrysostom's terms) of Scripture itself (cf. note 7 above).

my opinion to bring great peril to those rash enough to attempt it.

(14) "He placed in it," the text says, "the human being he had formed." Notice at once the regard he shows towards him. Having created him outside the garden, he immediately brought him in so as to provide him with an experience of his kindness through the things in the garden; he was introduced into the garden so that he might know the regard God had for him through the actions done there. "He placed in it the human being he had formed." The word "placed" let us interpret this way: he ordered him to live there in order that what he saw and his way of life should give him much pleasure, and should awaken him to an expression of thanks in consideration of all the kindness he had received without ever doing anything to deserve it. (109b) So don't let the reading "placed" disturb you; it is, after all, the unfailing custom of Scripture to employ human ways of speaking for our sake and for our benefit. To be convinced of this, notice how previously, in the case of creation of the stars, it used the same term in saying, "He placed them in the firmament of heaven," not that we should think of them fixed in heaven (for each of them pursues its own path moving from place to place), but to teach us that he commanded them to be in heaven just as he commanded the human being to live in the garden. "God also produced from the earth every tree beautiful to behold and good to eat, the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree for knowing good and evil."[10] Behold still another form of kindness out of regard for this creature. (109c) You see, since he wanted him to live in the garden, he ordered various trees to come forth from the earth, that could both delight him with their appearance and be pleasing to the taste. "Every tree," it says, "beautiful to behold"—that is, in appearance—"and good to eat;" in short, they had the ability to please him through their appearance and to provide much pleasure through their taste, and by their great abundance offered considerable good cheer to the one in a position to en-

10. Gn 2.9.

joy them. You see, it says, "Every tree," whatever name you give it, he made come forth. Do you recognize here a life free of any care? Do you see a wonderful existence? Like some angel, in fact, man lived this way on earth, wearing a body, yet being fortunately rid of any bodily needs; like a king adorned with sceptre and crown and wearing his purple robe, (109d) he revelled in this life of freedom and great affluence in the garden.

(15) "The tree of life in the middle of the garden," the text goes on to say, "and the tree for knowing good and evil." After teaching us that, according to the Lord's command, the earth produced every tree, lovely to behold and good to taste, it says next: "The tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree for knowing good and evil." The good Lord, you see, knowing as creator the harm that would in due time be likely to arise from this condition of great freedom, brought forth the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree for knowing good and evil, since before long he would be imposing on him abstinence from the tree so that man might realize that he owed enjoyment of them to divine love and goodness, and that God was Lord (110a) and creator of his nature as of all visible things. Beforehand, therefore, he made mention of the tree, and next he tells us the names of the rivers and their division, so to say, and that from that source, which irrigated the garden, others led off in four directions and thus marked out the regions of the earth. Perhaps, however, those people who like to talk from their own wisdom do not concede again that these rivers are rivers, or these waters really waters, but propound some different interpretation to people ready to lend them their ears.[11]

(16) Let us, however, I beg you, not be convinced by them, but block our ears against them; let us instead place our cre-

11. There is something strange about this rapid movement to a close of the homily in place of Chrysostom's usual lengthy parenetic conclusion. In place of it we have the barest exegesis of the tree for knowing good and evil—an obvious gem for Chrysostom with his moral style of commentary—and the briefest of references to the four rivers of vv.10–14. Something has happened to the homilist or the text of the homily.

dence in Sacred Scripture and heed what is told us there; let it be our concern to lay its sound teachings in our soul and be scrupulously careful about them and about our life, (110b) so that our life may witness to the teachings and the teachings may declare the integrity of our life. After all, it will be of no avail for us to get teachings right if we neglect life; nor will we be able to gain any value for our salvation if we have life but neglect right teachings. It is necessary, you see, if we would wish to avoid hell and reach heaven, to be distinguished for both—correctness of doctrine and attention to life. What good, after all, tell me, is a tree reaching to the sky and bearing leaves aplenty if it is devoid of fruit? So, too, with the Christian: correct doctrine is of no benefit unless one attends to the business of living. Accordingly Christ declared such people blessed: "Blessed is the one who does and teaches."[12] I mean, far more dependable and trustworthy than the teaching of words is teaching in action.

(17) Such persons, (110c) in fact, even without uttering a word, or else without being seen, can teach others, in the one case by the silent witness of their appearance and in the other through the sense of hearing; they will enjoy God's goodwill in great measure, promoting as they do the glory of their Lord, not only through their own efforts but also through those who notice them. Such persons raise thanks and praise to the God of all on a thousand tongues and in many mouths; for it is not only those who know them, the witnesses of their life, that will admire them and their Lord, but strangers who hear about it from others, people living far away and distant foreigners, not only friends but foes as well, who will respect the eminence of their virtue. Such is its efficacy, you see, that it stops the mouths of adversaries and bridles their tongue. And just as people with poor sight (110d) flinch from looking at the sun's rays, likewise evil will never be able to confront virtue, but will yield ground, turn away, and admit defeat.

(18) Convinced then of this, let us hold fast to virtue, and pass our lives safely, taking care to avoid the slightest appear-

12. A precis of Mt 5.19.

ance of sin in word or deed. In this way, you see, we will never fall into the worst of sins if we avoid small ones; and with the passage of time we will be able under the influence of help from on high to attain the pinnacle of virtue, escape any future punishment, and gain eternal reward, through the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen. (111a)

HOMILY 14

"The Lord God took the human being that he had formed and placed him in the garden of delights to till it and watch over it."[1]

ODAY AGAIN, IF you don't mind, we will continue in the direction of yesterday's sermon, and apply ourselves to the task of drawing out from there the thread of spiritual teaching for your benefit. There is, you see, great force concealed in the words read just now; we need to go into them at great depth and study them all with precision so as to reap the benefit they offer. To make a comparison with people trying to discover gems in the sea: they submit to such toil and trouble and expose themselves to the buffeting of the waves in order to light upon the object of their search. Consequently, we should apply our minds much more diligently to the task of discovering what lies concealed below the surface of the words, and thus lay hold of these valuable gems.

(2) Don't be concerned, dearly beloved, (111b) to hear reference to depths. In this case, you see, there is no unruly surge of waves; instead, there is the grace of the Spirit shining upon our minds, making possible for us an effortless discovery of what we seek and rendering every difficulty light. So whereas, on the one hand, the discovery of those other gems brings to one who chances upon them a benefit that is not extraordinary, on the other hand, it often results in injury and proves to be the cause of countless shipwrecks: the searcher does not gain joy from the discovery to the same extent as he is afflicted by unpleasantness in his discovery on account of the glances

1. Gn 2.15, Chrysostom's variant of the LXX mentioning a garden "of delights" continued in the Vulgate.

he attracts to himself from envious onlookers, exciting the greedy to enmity against him. To this extent the discovery of that type of stone, far from simply bringing no advantage to one's life, also proves the occasion of numerous contests. It lays the groundwork for greed, you see, it stokes the furnace of cupidity and lays siege to the soul of those caught up in it. (111c) In the case of these spiritual stones of great value, on the contrary, no such problem is to be feared; instead, the wealth to be won from them is beyond telling, the pleasure from them is proof against defect and surpasses by a great margin all joy accruing to human beings from that other source.

(3) Listen to David's words on the subject: "Your sayings are more to be desired than gold and much precious metal."[2] Do you see how he made open reference to those materials considered more valuable than others yet was not only dissatisfied with this comparison but added the word "much" and thence he clarified for us at that point the superiority involved: "More than gold," the text says, "and much precious metal." The reason that he made reference to these substances was not for the reason that the divine sayings are to be desired to that extent alone but because he recognized that only these substances enjoy the utmost pre-eminence in human estimation—hence by referring to them (111d) he demonstrated the superiority intended and the ardor of the desire felt for the sayings of the Spirit. So that you may learn that it is the unfailing practice of Sacred Scripture to compare the benefit that comes from it with perceptible realities and thus demonstrate the superiority of the former, listen also to what follows. He went on, at any rate, to add: "And sweeter than honey and a honeycomb." In this case, too, the reference is not for the reason that they are sweeter only to that extent, or can provide only that kind of sweetness, but because he had nothing else among material things to compare to the sweetness of the divine sayings—hence by referring to them he showed again

2. Ps 19.10.

their superiority and declared the sweetness of the spiritual teachings to be greater.

(4) You will find Christ, too, applying the same norm in the Gospels. When he was speaking to the disciples, remember, they were anxious to learn the meaning of the parable of the man (112a) sowing good seed in the field and his enemy throwing weeds in among the grain, so he explained to them the whole parable in detail, asking who was the man sowing the good seed, what was the field, what were the weeds and who scattered them, who were the harvesters and what was the harvest. When he had clarified all that for them, he then said, "Good people will be as brilliant as the sun in the kingdom of their Father"[3]—not for the reason that good people will have only that kind of brilliance, but to show that they will have much greater brilliance; he mentioned that kind because it is impossible to find a stronger image than that from among visible things. So when we hear something like that, let us not stop short at the literal level; instead, let us reason from the perceptible and visible realities to the superiority of spiritual realities in particular. Accordingly, if it is possible to discover the keener desire (112b) and the more heightened sweetness in this case (these sayings being, after all, divine and spiritual, and thus capable of prompting in the soul great spiritual joy), let us with great yearning and strong desire apply our ears to the words so that we may gain from them for ourselves true wealth and welcome many seeds that will germinate into right thinking about God, and thus make our way home.

(5) Let us, therefore, listen to what has been read today. Keep your mind ever attentive, however, I ask you, shake off all sloth and concerns for things of this life, and thus heed the words spoken. They are, after all, divine laws brought down from heaven for our salvation. To make a comparison: when letters are read out from our emperor, there is complete silence, all din and tumult hushed, everyone standing with eager attention and desire to hear (112c) what it is the imperial letters convey; anyone making the slightest noise or inter-

3. Mt 13.43.

rupting the flow of the reading runs the greatest risk.[4] Much more in this present case is there need to stand in fear and trembling, maintain utter silence, and rid yourselves of confusion in your thinking so that you may be able to understand what is said, while the King of heaven may accept your responsiveness and deem you worthy of greater favors.

(6) Accordingly, let us see what blessed Moses teaches us today also, telling us this as he does, not only by his own tongue but under the inspiration of the grace of the Spirit. He says: "The Lord God took the human being that he had formed." Right from the outset he has nicely put the two terms together: he didn't just say, "The Lord," and stop there, but added, "God," teaching us something that had escaped our notice and lain concealed in the text, (112d) so that we might realize that whether we hear "Lord" or "God" there is no difference in the names.[5] This point, however, I am not making without reason: my purpose is that when you hear Paul saying, "There is one God the Father, from whom all things come, and one Lord Jesus Christ, for whom all things exist,"[6] you won't think there is a difference in the expressions, one referring to a greater and the other to a lesser. Hence Scripture employs these names interchangeably so that people inclined to controversy may have no encouragement to assail orthodoxy with a figment of their own imagination. That you may learn that Sacred Scripture says none of these things with distinction and discrimination in mind, notice precisely what emerges from this very sentence under consideration. "The Lord God took," it says. To whom does the heretic want this to refer? The Father alone? Very well, then. Listen to Paul's words: (113a) "There is one God the Father, from whom all things come, and one Lord Jesus Christ, for whom all things

4. This is another of the more celebrated figures Chrysostom employs for Sacred Scripture, akin to that of the letters sent by God and delivered by Moses that is elaborated in Homily 2.

5. For Chrysostom there are no traces of different sources for the names employed in his text; but perhaps we are still surprised to find him asserting their complete equivalence, something an acquaintance with the Hebrew language and mentality would have discouraged in him.

6. 1 Cor 8.6.

exist." Do you see how he applies the word "Lord" to the Son? So would they say the word "Lord" is greater than "God"? See how anomalous this is, and the extent of the blasphemy it provides a basis for. You see, whenever people are unwilling to take the consequences of following the norm of Sacred Scripture,[7] wishing to make room for the vagaries of private reasoning, they upset their sense of balance and undermine the solid orthodoxy of dogmas with endless disputes and questioning.

(7) "The Lord God took the human being that he had formed," the text says, "and placed him in the garden of delights to till it and watch over it." See the extent of the providence he employs in regard to the human being he has created. I mean, after blessed Moses taught us yesterday that, to quote him, (113b) "God planted the garden and placed in it the human creature"—in other words, he wanted him to have his dwelling place there and pass his days in enjoyment of the garden—today he goes on to show us God's unspeakable love manifested in his regard. Taking up this theme he says: "The Lord God took the human being he had formed and placed him in the garden of delights." He did not simply say, "In the garden," but added, "of delights," so as to reveal to us the exceeding pleasure he enjoyed from living there. And after saying, "He placed him in the garden of delights," he said, "to till it and watch over it." A mark, this, of great solicitude.

(8) I mean, since life there was filled with every delight, was a pleasure to behold (113c) and a thrill to enjoy, he arranged accordingly that the human being should till the garden and watch over it lest he be unsettled by the exceeding indulgence ("Idleness," Scripture says, remember, "has been the teacher of every evil"[8]). Well, why, do you ask, did the garden require attention by him? I'm not telling you that, but in fact God wanted him for a while to take some slight care that was appropriate in both watching and tilling. If, after all, he had

7. Again Chrysostom's insistence on following the norm, *canōn*, of Scripture itself in interpreting it, as he insisted even more strongly in Homily 13.

8. Sir. 33.28.

been relieved of all need to work, he would have fallen a victim to great indulgence and at once have slipped into sloth; whereas in fact by performing some work that was painless and without difficulty he would be brought to a better frame of mind.

(9) That phrase, "to watch over it," is not added idly: it is an instance of considerateness in expression to the effect that he might be fully aware that he was subject to a master who had regaled him with such enjoyment, and along with that enjoyment entrusted him with its protection. (113d) God, you see, creates everything and arranges it for our salvation, and as well as that presents us with enjoyment and relaxation. If on account of his exceeding love he prepared those ineffable goods before creating us—as he himself says, "Come, you blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world"[9]—much more will he provide us with everything in this world in generous measure.

(10) So he conferred such favors on this creature, first bringing him from non-being to being, then deeming it proper to shape his body from dust, and after that as the supreme gesture bestowing on him his incorporeal soul through the action of breathing, then bidding the garden be created and directing him to spend his life there, later, like a (114a) loving father who prevents his young child from being unsettled by great relaxation and freedom from care by devising some slight responsibility appropriate to the situation, the Lord God in like manner ordered the task of tilling and guarding for Adam so that along with all those delights, relaxation and freedom from care he might have, by way of a stabilizing influence, those two tasks to prevent him from overstepping the limit. So these things had already happened to the newly created being, whereas what happened in addition makes clear to us again the great and unsurpassed love for him, as well as the considerateness he displays on account of his own good-

9. Mt 25.34.

ness. What in fact does Scripture say? "The Lord God instructed Adam."[10]

(11) In this case also notice him once more following the same habit so that we might receive a precise statement of the teaching through the repetition of the terms, and no longer tolerate those people presuming to make distinctions in assigning the names ascribing one to the Father and the other to the Son. In fact, since (114b) both have the one essence, logically Sacred Scripture can be found applying the same name interchangeably to the Father in one place and to the Son in another. The text says, "The Lord God instructed Adam in these words." At this we very properly are astonished at God's loving kindness beyond all telling, which he reveals to us through this brief sentence. "He instructed," it says. Notice from the outset how much esteem he evidences for the human being. I mean, it didn't say, He commanded, or He ordered, but "He instructed." Just as one friend is said to instruct another about some pressing needs, God, too, in like manner conducts his relationship with Adam, just as if he wants to win him over through this attitude of esteem to obedience to his instructions. "The Lord God instructed Adam in these words: 'From all the trees in the garden you are to eat your fill, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat. (114c) On the day that you eat from it you will truly die.'"[11]

(12) No great difficulty in this instruction. Yet, dearly beloved, sloth is a terrible fault:[12] just as it makes easy things seem hard to us, so enthusiasm and alertness render even hard things easy for us. I mean, what, I ask you, could be simpler than this instruction? What could be greater than the esteem shown here? Provision had been made for his spend-

10. Gn 2.16. Chrysostom finds "Adam" in his LXX text, which is probably misreading the Heb. for "the man," whereas the naming of Adam comes later, in ch.5—though in a consonantal Heb. text the two forms are indistinguishable when preceded by a preposition as here. (See Speiser's remarks on Gn 2.22, *Genesis* 18.)

11. Gn 2.16–17.

12. So Chrysostom's pet aversion, *rhathumia*, "sloth, indifference" (cf. Homily 10, note 5 above and earlier references), now becomes the original sin.

ing life in the garden, for enjoying the beauty of visible things, for gladdening the eye from that experience, and gaining much pleasure from that enjoyment. Consider, after all, how great a thrill it was to see the trees groaning under the weight of their fruit, to see the variety of the flowers, the different kinds of plants, the leaves on the branches, and all the other things you would be likely to chance upon in a garden, especially a garden planted by God. On that account, you see, Sacred Scripture had said previously that "he produced from the earth every tree fair to behold and good to eat,"[13] so that we might know that, (114d) despite his enjoyment of such plenty, the human being trampled underfoot the instruction given him, out of his great intemperance and sloth. I mean, consider, I ask you, dearly beloved, the high degree of esteem he had lavished upon him, laying for him in the garden a table set apart for him to suit his tastes, in case you might think the same food was supplied for him as for the brute beasts: instead, passing his time in that garden like a king he could revel in its enjoyment, and like a master he had no occasion to mix with those ministering to him but had a life all to himself.

(13) "The Lord God instructed Adam in these words: 'From every tree in the garden you are to eat your fill; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil do not eat. On the day you eat from it you will truly die'"—as if to say to him, Surely it's not something harsh and burdensome I'm demanding of you? While entrusting you with enjoyment of everything, (115a) only this one thing I'm instructing you not to touch; but I also decree a severe penalty so that fear of it may help you keep your balance and you may observe the direction given you by me. He did this in the manner of a kindly master entrusting his huge residence to someone and prescribing some humble coin to be given by him as a pledge for keeping the ownership intact for himself. Well, in quite the same way our loving Lord lavished on the human being the enjoyment of everything in the garden, and bade him abstain from one

13. Gn 2.9.

tree only so as to be in a position to know that he is subject to the Lord, whom he should obey and to whose commands he should submit.

(14) Who could adequately admire the generosity of the common Lord of all? With what great kindness he regales the creature who has not yet anything to show for himself? I mean, he did not (115b) confine to half the garden the enjoyment he permitted, nor bid him abstain from most things and retain the enjoyment of the remainder. Instead, he wanted him to partake of everything in the garden and ordered him to abstain from the one tree only, showing through these things he had no other purpose in his actions than that he should be able to recognize the one responsible for such acts of kindness. Notice in this case as well as others God's goodness, how much regard he demonstrates also for the woman due to be formed from man. I mean, though she is yet to be created he gives instruction as though to two people in the words, "'Do not eat from it,'" and, "'On the day ye eat from it you will truly die,'" showing right from the outset that man and woman are one, as Paul also says, "The man is head of the woman."[14] So he speaks as though to two people for this reason, (115c) that when later he has formed the woman from man, he may provide the latter with an excuse for acquainting her with God's instructions.

(15) I am aware that this question about the tree is commonly debated, and that many people inclined to speak incautiously endeavor to shift the blame from human beings to God, presuming to ask, Why on earth did he give him the instruction in the knowledge that he would infringe it? and again, Why did he order the tree to be in the garden? and many other such queries. In case, however, at this stage before the right time for discussion of the Fall we should seem to be rushing into exegesis about such matters, we ought wait for blessed Moses' account so as to reach that passage by this means at the appropriate stage and raise with you in that regard whatever matters God's grace has communicated, and

14. Eph 5.23.

thus teach you, dear people, the true mind of Scripture. Thus, (115d) in your knowledge of the truth of the sacred writings you may both offer to the Lord due praise and also escape at the hands of the guiltless God a share in the sinner's guilt through neglect of him.

(16) The moment has arrived at long last, however, it would seem, for us to proceed with the theme of the reading. "The Lord God said," the text goes on, "'It is not good for the human being to be alone.'" See how once again it said in the same way as previously, "The Lord God," so that we should rivet the words on our minds and not think the fruit of our human reasoning to be superior to Sacred Scripture. "The Lord God said," it says, "'It is not good for the human being to be alone.'"[15] Notice how the good God does not stop short, but adds kindness to kindness, and, in an abundance of riches, wants to clothe this rational being in every degree of esteem, and along with this esteem to regale him with a life of ease. The text says, remember, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for (116a) the human being to be alone. Let us make him a helpmate like himself.'" Notice here again the expression, "'Let us make.'" In other words, just as he said at the beginning in the case of the formation of the human being, "'Let us make a human being in our image and likeness,'" so now, too, on the point of forming woman he employs the same expression, saying, "'Let us make.'" To whom does he address it? Not to any created power, but to the One begotten of him, Wonderful Counsellor, Figure of Authority, Prince of Peace, his only-begotten Son.[16] So that Adam may learn that the being in process of being formed is meant to enjoy equality of esteem with him, accordingly just as he said in the man's case, "'Let us make,'" so he now says also, "'Let us make him a helpmate like himself.'" Both expressions, helpmate and like himself have much significance. (116b)

(17) I do not want him to be alone, Scripture is saying, but to have some support from company, and not this only but a helpmate suited to him should be produced, hinting at

15. Gn 2.18. 16. Cf. Is 9.6.

woman. Hence he said, "'Let us make him a helpmate,'" and added, "'like himself,'" so that when shortly you saw wild beasts produced and all the birds of heaven, you would not think reference was made to them. I mean, even if many of the brute beasts helped him in his labors, there was still nothing equivalent to a woman, possessed as she was of reason. Hence he said, "'a helpmate like himself,'" and added, "Further, God formed from the earth all the wild beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven; he led them to Adam to see what he would call them, and each name Adam gave a living being, that was its name."[17]

(18) It is not idly and to no (116c) purpose that this happens, but on account of what was due to take place shortly afterwards. In his foreknowledge of it, God shows us the great intelligence with which he endowed the being created by him, so that when the event occurs of the transgression of the instruction given by God, you won't think the human being sinned through ignorance but will be in a position to know that it was a sin of sloth. I mean, the fact of his being lavishly endowed with intelligence, learn from what happens now. The text says: "He led them to Adam to see what he would call them." He does this out of a desire to provide us with a demonstration of Adam's great intelligence. And further, "The name Adam gave," the text says, "was its name."

(19) This happens, not that we may merely learn of his intelligence but that a symbol of his dominion may be provided through the imposition of the names. You see, (116d) with human beings also this normally constitutes a symbol of dominion—when they buy slaves, to change their names. Hence God provides that Adam, too, as their master should give names to the brute beasts. I mean, dearly beloved, don't pass the expression idly by; consider, instead, I ask you, the extent of his intelligence demonstrated by his giving names to such species of winged creatures, reptiles, wild beasts, beasts of burden and the other brute beasts, the tame and the wild, those that inhabit the deeps, those that spring from the earth—

17. Gn 2.19.

to all these he gave names that indicated his dominion and that were appropriate to each species—as the text says, "Each name Adam gave was its name." Do you see the unrivalled authority? Do you see his lordly dominance? Consider in addition to other factors this event, that lions, panthers, snakes, scorpions, serpents, and (117a) all the other animals fiercer than those, came in complete subjection to him as to a master and accepted the names, while Adam had no fear of these wild beasts.

(20) So let no one call in question what is created by the Lord nor sharpen the tongue against the Creator—or, rather, against his own head—and say those stupid words, Why were the wild beasts produced? I mean, the imposition of names shows us precisely that all animals, tame included, acknowledged their servitude and the human dominion; after all, those names that he imposed on them remain up to the present time.[18] In this way God determined that we might retain a constant reminder of the esteem which the human being from the outset received from the Lord of all and might attribute responsibility for its removal to the person who (117b) by sin put an abrupt end to his authority.

(21) "Adam gave names to all the cattle," the text goes on, "all the birds of heaven, and all the beasts of the earth."[19] Notice already in this case, I ask you, dearly beloved, his independence of decision and the eminence of his understanding, and don't say he didn't know right from wrong. I mean, the being that has the ability to put the right names on cattle, and birds, and beasts without getting the sequence mixed up, not giving to wild beasts the names suited to the tame ones nor allotting to the tame animals what belonged to the wild ones, but giving them all their right names—how could he not be full of intelligence and understanding? Consider finally from this passage how great the force of that breathing, and the intelligence of that incorporeal soul (117c) which the Lord had

18. Said with tongue in cheek? or just an occasional reminder of Chrysostom's lack of sophistication as a commentator for all his theological profundity?

19. Gn 2.20.

granted him in constituting such a remarkable rational being of two elements, and intertwining the incorporeal element of the soul with the body, like an excellent craftsman related to his instrument. So, whenever you ponder the extent of this being's intelligence, marvel at the Creator's power. After all, if the visible beauty of heaven prompts a well-disposed onlooker to praise of its Creator, much more readily will this rational being, the human person, be able to reason from the manner of its own formation, the eminence of esteem and greatness of gifts accorded it, and thus come to celebrate unceasingly the provider of such ineffable kindnesses and give praise to the Lord for his power.

(22) I had in mind to go on to what follows in the text; but in case (117d) we should impair the recollection of what has been said already by an excess of words, it behoves us to conclude the flow of instruction at this point. After all, it is not simply the object of our concern to say a lot of things heedlessly; rather, we speak with this aim in view, that you will keep them constantly riveted in your mind so as not merely to have knowledge yourselves of the contents of the Holy Scriptures, but also become teachers of others, capable of admonishing them. So let each of you, I beseech you, go away from here, in the company of your neighbor reawaken the memory of what has been said, offer him what comes from your own heart and listen to what has been remembered by him. So, recalling everything spoken here, and keeping it in your memory in this way, make your way home, ruminating on these divine teachings; hence you may give all your attention to these matters and occupy your mind with them, and so be able to overcome with ease troublesome passions and escape the devil's wiles.[20] You see, (118a) whenever that evil spirit spies a soul wrapt in the things of God, constantly contemplating them and going over them in mind, he doesn't dare approach;

20. A further reminder that to Chrysostom's mind his congregation were not mere passive recipients of his scriptural instructions but activated to continued meditation on the message and (as we have seen above) students of it in the Bible discussions within the domestic Church.

instead, he makes off at speed, repelled by the force of the Spirit as though by some fire.

(23) So, in order that we may gain the fullest benefit ourselves, may be able to overcome that creature and win grace from God more abundantly, let us occupy our minds with these matters. In this way, you see, everything in our charge will be simplified for us, difficult things will become easy, what seemed threatening will reach a useful conclusion, and nothing on this earth will be able to distress us. I mean, if we concern ourselves with the things of God, he will concern himself with ours, and in complete safety we will navigate the ocean of this life, (118b) and under the guidance of that mighty pilot, the God of all, put into the harbor of his love, to whom be glory and power, now and forever, for unending ages of ages. Amen.

HOMILY 15

"For Adam, however, there proved to be no helpmate of his kind. God caused a drowsiness to come upon Adam, and he fell asleep. God took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. The Lord God fashioned the rib that he had taken from Adam into a woman."[1]

AM VERY GRATIFIED by you for the fact that yesterday you received with great enthusiasm the exhortation we gave and, far from being upset at the length of the discourse, you followed it to the very end (118c) in such a way that your desire for listening reached great heights and continued at that level. Hence the sound hopes communicated to us that you would translate our advice into practice. I mean, the person who listens with such relish would clearly be prepared for practice of good works; and in a particular way your attendance today would provide a proof of your health of soul. You see, just as hunger is a sign of bodily well-being, so love for divine sayings proves to be the surest sign of the soul's health.

(2) So, when the fruit of your zeal shows the outcome of your attention, well then, let us in turn pay to you, dear people, the reward we promised yesterday—I mean the reward of this spiritual teaching, which has the capacity both to increase my own resources while I am paying it and to render you its recipients wealthy. (118d) All spiritual goods are like this, after all—something that can't be said for material things. In the latter case, in other words, the one who pays reduces his own substance and makes the recipient better off, whereas in the former case, on the contrary, things are different: the one

1. Gn 2.20–22. Cf. Homily 14, note 10 above on the LXX (and Chrysostom's) reading "Adam" in these verses.

who pays increases his own wealth by so doing and the resources of the recipients become greater.

(3) So, since we are well disposed for kindness and you are ready to receive this spiritual wealth, keep the recesses of your mind in a state of readiness. Come now, let us fulfil our promise; let us take up again the thread of the reading from blessed Moses, and discharge our debt to you at this point. We need, therefore, to give an open explanation of the words read yesterday with a view to exploring precisely the richness of thought concealed in the words and (1192a) proposing it to you, my dear people. In other words, listen now to the words of Sacred Scripture: "For Adam, however, there proved to be no helpmate of his kind." What is the force of this brief phrase, "For Adam, however"? Why did he add the particle?[2] I mean, would it not have been enough to say, For Adam? Let us not be heedless in our anxiety to explore these matters, acting out of great curiosity; instead, let us act so as to interpret everything precisely and instruct you not to pass by even a brief phrase or a single syllable contained in the Holy Scriptures. After all, they are not simply words, but words of the Holy Spirit, and hence the treasure to be found in even a single syllable is great. So attend carefully, I beseech you: let everyone give an alert attention, I ask you, no one sluggish, no one drowsy; (1192b) let no one be distracted in thinking of outside concerns, or bring here the worries of daily life and stay wrapt in them. Instead, consider the dignity of this spiritual gathering and the fact that we are listening to God speaking to us through the tongue of the inspired authors. Give your attention in this way and keep your mind alert lest any of the seeds sown by us will fall on rock, or by the roadside, or among thistles; instead, let the whole batch of seeds be sown

2. A classic instance of Chrysostom's interest in the precision, *akribeia*, of the text, to which he brings (and urges his audience to bring) a like precision to the task of interpretation. And as an index that it is no dry pedantry that lies behind his own precision, there follows his insistence that such textual details are saving gifts of the Spirit who inspires the author. See my article, "*Akribeia*: a principle of Chrysostom's exegesis," *Colloquium* 14 (Oct. 1981) 32–36 for other examples from Chrysostom's works.

on good ground—I mean the field of your mind—and thus be in a position to yield you a generous crop and multiply the amount sown by us.

(4) Let us see, now at long last, what is the conjunctive force of this particle. "For Adam, however," the text says, "there proved to be no helpmate of his kind." Notice, I remind you, the precision of Sacred Scripture. After saying, "For Adam, however, there proved to be no helpmate," it did not stop there but added, "of his kind," (119c) clarifying for us by the addition the reason why it formed the conjunction with the particle. I would think the sharper ones among you would probably by now be in a position to apply yourselves to predicting what is about to be said. Since, however, we must keep our instruction addressed to you all alike and make our words clear to everybody, come now, let us teach you why he spoke in that way. But wait just a moment: you remember in what was mentioned before that after Sacred Scripture said, "'Let us make him a helpmate like himself,'" it immediately taught us about the creation of wild beasts, reptiles and all the irrational animals, saying as it did, "Further, God formed from the earth all the wild beasts of the field and all the birds of heaven; he led them to Adam to see what he would call them." Like their master he imposed names on them (119d) and to each species he assigned its own name, wild beasts, birds, and all irrational animals according to the intelligence granted him, so that we at this stage might be in a position to know that all those creatures, despite the ministering role they play and the assistance they give human beings in their labors, are nonetheless irrational and in great measure inferior to them—just in case we might think it was about them God said, "'Let us make a helpmate for him.'" You see, although they are helpful and make a very useful contribution to the service of human beings, they are nonetheless irrational.

(5) The fact that they are helpful, after all, emerges from experience. I mean, some are suited to bearing loads for us, while others to working the soil: an ox draws the plough, cuts furrows, and provides for us much other assistance in farming; likewise an ass makes itself very useful in bearing loads;

and many other of the irrational animals (120a) service our bodily needs. Sheep, after all, meet our needs from their wool for making clothes, and again in similar fashion goats provide a service for us from their coat, their milk and other things related to our living. So in case you think it was in reference to them it was said above, "'Let us make him a helpmate,'" it now begins its statement with the words, "For Adam, however, there proved to be no helpmate of his kind," as if blessed Moses were teaching us in saying these words that, while all these animals were created and received from Adam the assignment of names, nevertheless none of them proved to be adequate for helping him. Accordingly he wants to teach us about the formation of the being about to be brought forth and the fact that this being due for creation is the one he was speaking about. "'Let us make him a helpmate like himself,'" meaning of his kind, with the same properties as himself, (120b) of equal esteem, in no way inferior to him. Hence his words, "For Adam, however, there proved to be no helpmate of his kind," by which this blessed author shows us that whatever usefulness these irrational animals bring to our service, the help provided for Adam by woman is different and immeasurably superior.

(6) So, now that all the animals were created and had received their names from the first man, the loving Lord made it his concern to create a helpmate for him of his kind; having arranged everything with this creature of his in mind and for his sake brought forth all this visible creation, after all the other beings he creates also woman. Notice how he teaches us precisely the process of her creation too. I mean, after teaching us that he wanted to produce for man a helpmate like him by saying previously, "'Let us make him a helpmate like himself,'" (120c) and then adding, "There proved to be no helpmate of his own kind," accordingly he set about the formation of this creature of similar properties to him, and the text says, "God caused drowsiness to come upon Adam, and he slept. God took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. The Lord God fashioned the rib he had taken from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam." There is

great force in these words, surpassing all human reasoning. I mean, it is not possible to comprehend their grandeur in any other way than by viewing everything with the eyes of faith. "God caused drowsiness to come upon Adam," the text says, "and he slept."

(7) Notice the precision of the teaching. This blessed author has stipulated both things, or rather the Holy Spirit through his tongue, teaching us the sequence of what happened. "God caused drowsiness to come upon Adam," the text says, "and he slept." (120d) It wasn't simply drowsiness that came upon him nor normal sleep; instead, the wise and skilful Creator of our nature was about to remove one of Adam's ribs. Lest the experience cause him pain and afterwards he be badly disposed towards the creature formed him from his rib, and through memory of the pain bear a grudge against this being at its formation, God induced in him this kind of sleep: He caused a drowsiness to come upon him and bid him be weighed down as though by some heavy weight. His purpose was that, far from allowing man to suffer any sense of what was happening, he should, like some excellent craftsman, do away with mere appearances, supply for any deficiencies and in his own loving kindness create what had thus been taken from man. The text says, remember, "God caused drowsiness to come upon Adam, and he slept. God took one of Adam's ribs and closed up the flesh in its place" so that after the release of sleep he could not feel the loss he was suffering. You see, even if (121a) he was unaware at the time of the removal, nevertheless afterwards he would be likely to realize what had happened. So lest he cause him pain in removing it, or the loss of it cause him any distress later, he thus provided for both eventualities by making the removal painless and supplying for the loss without letting him feel anything of what had happened. So, the text says, the Lord God took the rib and fashioned it into a woman. A remarkable expression, defying our reasoning with its extraordinary boldness. After all, everything done by the Lord has this character; forming the human being from dust is no less remarkable than this.

(8) Notice the considerateness of Sacred Scripture in the

words employed with our limitations in mind: "God took one of his ribs," the text says. Don't take the words in human fashion; rather, (121b) interpret the concreteness of the expressions from the viewpoint of human limitations. You see, if he had not used these words, how would we have been able to gain knowledge of these mysteries which defy description? Let us therefore not remain at the level of the words alone, but let us understand everything in a manner proper to God because applied to God. That phrase, "He took," after all, and other such are spoken with our limitations in mind.

(9) Now consider how here again he follows the same practice as in the case of Adam. I mean, just as in that case he said once, a second time and in fact frequently, "The Lord God took the human being that he had formed," and again, "The Lord God instructed Adam," and further, "The Lord God said, 'Let us make him a helpmate like himself,'" so here too it says, "The Lord God fashioned the rib he had taken from Adam into a woman," and previously, "The Lord God caused drowsiness to come upon Adam," (121c) so that you might know that there is no difference between Father and Son in these expressions; instead, on account of both of them having the one essence, Sacred Scripture applies the names indiscriminately. See at any rate how, in the case of the formation of woman as well, it followed the same practice, saying, "The Lord God fashioned the rib he had taken from Adam into a woman."

(10) What would be said in this case by those heretics who are always intent on calling everything into question and who hold the opinion that the origin of the Creator of all has been comprehended? What words can express the full sense of this? What kind of mind can grasp it? He took one rib, the text says—and how from this single rib did he fashion the complete being? Yet why do I say, how from this single thing did he fashion the being? Tell me, how did the removal happen? How was it he felt nothing of the removal? You can tell me none of these things; (121d) only the one who did the creating knows. So if we don't comprehend these things we are familiar with and what has to do with the formation of the

being of the same race as ourselves, how much madness and folly does it betray to meddle in what concerns the Creator and to allege that those matters have been comprehended which not even incorporeal and divine powers have knowledge of, but rather continue without ceasing to praise in fear and trembling?

(11) "The Lord God," the text says, "fashioned the rib he had taken from Adam into a woman." See the precision of Scripture. I mean, it no longer said, He formed, but "He fashioned," since he took part of what was already formed and, so to say, made up for what was lacking. Hence it says, "He fashioned:" he didn't perform further shaping, (122a) but took some small part of the shaping already done, fashioned this part and made a complete being. How great the power of God, the master craftsman, making a likeness of those limbs from that tiny part, creating such wonderful senses, and preparing a creature complete, entire and perfect, capable both of speaking and of providing much comfort to man by a sharing of her being. For it was for the consolation of this man that this woman was created. Hence Paul also said, "Man was not created for woman, but woman for man."[3] Do you see how everything is made for him? I mean, after the act of creation, after the brute beasts were brought forth, some suited for eating and some capable of assisting with man's service, (122b) the human being that had been formed stood in need of someone to talk to and able to offer him much comfort by a sharing of her being. So, from man's rib God creates this rational being, and in his inventive wisdom he makes it complete and perfect, like man in every detail—rational, capable of rendering him what would be of assistance in times of need and the pressing necessities of life. It was God, you see, who was arranging everything in his wisdom and creative power. After all, we for our part, even though unable with the limitations of our reasoning to comprehend the way things happen, nevertheless believe that everything yields to his will and that whatever he directs is in fact brought forth. "The Lord God,"

3. 1 Cor 11.9.

the text says, "fashioned the rib he had taken from Adam into a woman, and led her (122c) to Adam," showing that it was for him that he had made her. He led her to Adam, it says. That is, since among all the other creatures there proved to be no helpmate of his kind (so the text says), lo, the promise I made (having guaranteed as I did to provide you with a helpmate of your kind) I kept by giving you one.

(12) "He led her to Adam," the text says, remember. "'Now there is someone, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.'"[4] Notice here, I ask you, dearly beloved, how along with this ineffable intelligence bestowed on him by God, which he demonstrated to us by the imposition of names he gave to all those species of brute beasts, he was endowed also with the prophetic grace. I mean, the reason why this blessed author taught us in the preceding passages that Adam was overcome by drowsiness and sleep (122d) so as to have no sense at all of what happened was that when you come to know that on seeing the woman he describes her creation precisely, you may have no doubt that he is saying this under the influence of the prophetic grace and the inspiration of instruction by the Holy Spirit. You see, when God led her to him, he said, without knowledge of anything that had happened, "'Now there is someone bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.'"

(13) Yet some other translator[5] renders it "This once" instead of "Now", to indicate that this happened only on this occasion, and there will be no repetition of the formation of woman. Now, it is saying, woman has been made from man whereas later it will not be like this; instead, man will come from woman—or rather, not from woman but from the cooperation of the two, as Paul also says, "Man is not from woman, but woman from man; and man was not created (123a) for woman, but woman for man."[6] True, he is saying, but

4. Gn 2.23.

5. De Montfaucon notes that in fact both Symmachus and Theodotion, second century translators/adaptors, rendered the words thus—an unusually critical comment from Chrysostom, suggesting again the level of sophistication with which he credits his congregation. (See Rahlfs' introduction to his *Septuaginta* 1.)

6. 1 Cor 11.8–9.

these words indicate that woman was made from man. Still, wait a while and you will see his precise teaching in what follows. He goes on, in fact: "Yet man is not independent of woman nor woman of man,"[7] teaching us that in the course of things the human being's composition will derive from both man and woman through their intercourse. Hence Adam, too, said, "'Now there is someone, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.'"

(14) Then, in order that you may come to realize the precision of his prophecy, and how what he had said has been conspicuous for its brilliance up to the present time and to its fulfilment, listen also to what follows: "'She shall be called woman,'" it says, "'because she was taken from her husband.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother, (123b) and will cling to his wife and the two will come to be one flesh."[8] Do you see how he opened everything up to us, clarifying each detail precisely for us through his own prophecy: "'She shall be called woman,'" it says, "'because she was taken from her husband.'" Again he hints to us of the removal of his rib; then, to indicate what was about to happen, the text says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother, and will cling to his wife and the two will come to be one flesh." Where, tell me, did these things come from for him to utter? From what source did he gain knowledge of future events and the fact that the race of human beings should grow into a vast number? Whence, after all, did he come to know that there would be intercourse between man and woman? I mean, the consummation of that intercourse occurred after the Fall; up till that time (123c) they were living like angels in paradise and so they were not burning with desire, not as-

7. Ib.11. As we have had occasion to note already in Introduction 14 and Homily 8, note 16, Chrysostom's egalitarianism here regarding the sexes is not altogether typical or sustained.

8. Gn 2.23–24. Chrysostom's Grk text, like the LXX generally, cannot transmit the play upon words *ishshah* . . . *ish* that survives better in English "woman . . . man." On the other hand, the Grk translators tended to introduce an unnecessary future tense to verbs where the present more accurately renders the Heb. (cf. M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, 4th ed., English translation (Rome 1963) ## 279-81).

saulted by other passions, not subject to the needs of nature, but on the contrary were created incorruptible and immortal, and on that account at any rate they had no need to wear clothes. "They were both naked," the text says, remember, "and were not ashamed." You see, while sin and disobedience had not yet come on the scene, they were clad in that glory from above which caused them no shame; but after the breaking of the law, then entered the scene both shame and awareness of their nakedness. So, from what source, tell me, did these things come for him to utter? Surely it's obvious that before his disobedience he had a share in prophetic grace and saw everything through the eyes of the Spirit.

(15) These matters, however, I am bringing to your attention not without purpose; my intention instead is that even in this early instance you may grasp God's surpassing love (123d) displayed in regard to human kind in granting them from the outset an angelic way of life, bestowing countless benefits on them and regaling them with prophetic grace along with all other goods. Then, when by contrast you see mankind's lack of response despite such works of kindness, you may no longer lay responsibility at God's door but recognize it completely as man's. It is He, after all, who became responsible for all the troubles that befell him, to such an extent that in future you may learn both about the loss of such advantages and the condemnation he incurred for his disobedience. You see, whenever I consider the way of life God had granted him, showing him to such a degree generous marks of kindness—firstly, the fact that before his formation he had produced the whole of the created universe for him, and then at that stage created him so that he might come into existence and enjoy (124a) all visible things; next he ordered the garden be created and intended man should pass his life there, marking him off from all the brute beasts and giving him authority over them, and he bade him give them all names in the manner of a master with his slaves; then, when he was alone and needed some helpmate to share with him the same being, far from overlooking this, God brought forth the woman and committed her to the man in the manner he wanted, and after all these

he bestowed on him also the dignity of prophecy. In the wake of these ineffable kindnesses he regaled him with the crown of them all, liberating him from all the concerns of the body, forestalling even the need for wearing clothes or any other necessity. On the contrary, as I said before, he intended man should pass his days on earth like some terrestrial angel. Accordingly, whenever I consider all these things, (124b) I am amazed by the Lord's loving kindness for our race and by man's lack of response, as well as the devil's envy; the evil spirit, after all, could not bear to see an angelic way of life in a human body.

(16) In case, however, we prolong our sermon to a great length, we will, if you like, keep for later the account of the evil spirit's plotting and bring the sermon to a close at this point, urging you in your goodness to remember with precision what has been said and meditate on it all so as to have it firmly lodged in your mind. You see, if you constantly have in mind God's kindnesses which he has conferred on our race, we will ourselves be grateful and as well this habit will prove the greatest encouragement to us along the way of virtue. After all, the person who is mindful of God's kindnesses will clearly make the effort not to appear unworthy of them but to demonstrate such zeal and (124c) gratitude as to be deemed worthy even of further marks of kindness. Our Lord, you see, is prodigal with his favors, and when he sees us behaving gratefully for what has already come to us from him, he lavishes abundant grace on us and deems us worthy of even further gifts, provided we make our salvation a matter of concern and do not let the time slip away idly nor watch half of the holy season of Lent slipping away before our eyes; instead, our concern should be to see to some good conduct in all this season and to correction of the passions that assail us. You see, if it proved to be the case that we remained exactly as we were despite the daily advantage we enjoy of spiritual instruction, and did not devote ourselves to virtue, nor eliminate from our soul the various forms of wickedness, not only would we have gained no advantage but we would have incurred greater harm. I mean, whenever anyone who has the

advantage of such attention gains nothing from it, the greater the fire of Gehenna heaped up for them.

(17) Accordingly, (124d) I beseech you to make proper use of the time remaining in Lent and bring yourselves under close scrutiny each week, or rather each day; rid your soul of deficiencies and lay secure hold on practices of virtue, as the inspired author recommended,[9] desisting from evil and adopting virtue in its place—such, after all, is true fasting. Let the irascible person rid the soul of this passion that inhibits pious thinking, and turn instead to mildness and reasonableness. Let the slothful and unmortified person, whose fancy is titillated by bodily graces, discipline his thinking and engrave on the texture of his mind the law of the Lord which says, "The man who gazes on a woman so as to lust after her has already committed sin with her in his heart;"[10] let him banish the passion of incontinence and practice sobriety. (125a) Likewise, let the person who is rash in speech and an idle commentator on events imitate the blessed author and say, "Place a guard on my mouth, Lord, and a heavy door about my lips;"[11] let him never give vent to words idly and by chance, but listen instead to Paul's warning: "Let all shouting, rage, blasphemy, foul language and ribald jesting be far from you, along with all other forms of wickedness,"[12] and in another place, "May there be some good speech for edification and profit, so as to bring grace on the listeners."[13] By all means avoid oaths, in response to Christ's condemnation in the words, "It was said to people of old, Do not perjure yourself; but I tell you, take no oaths at all."[14] So don't tell me, I take no oath in a just cause: there is no call for swearing in just cause or unjust. (125b) Accordingly, keep your mouth clean of any oath, and ward off all such from your tongue, your lips, and your mind so that no evil thoughts arise within you or pass beyond your lips. Close your ears securely so as to admit no idle report, as blessed Moses

9. Cf. Ps 37.27.
10. Mt 5.28.
11. Ps 141.3.
12. Eph 4.31, where Chrysostom's list varies somewhat from our received text.
13. Ib.29.
14. Mt 5.33–34 abbreviated.

bade us in the words, "Admit no idle report,"[15] and as blessed David likewise said, "I kept far from me the man maligning his neighbor behind his back."[16]

(18) Do you see, dearly beloved, how much vigilance we need, how much effort on our way to virtue? how even some slight neglect brings on us the risk of complete disaster? Hence in another place as well blessed David shouts aloud his accusation against the person guilty of this: "You sit down and slander your brother, (125c) against your mother's son you spread scandal."[17] If we protect all parts of our body in this way, we will be able both to be spurred on to works of virtue and to occupy our tongue in glory and praise of the God of all—our hearing in listening to the divine sayings and learning them, our minds in comprehension of spiritual teachings, our hands in almsgiving and the practice of good deeds rather than in theft and greed, and our feet in entering the church, houses of prayer and the shrines of the holy martyrs rather than theatres, race courses and harmful spectacles, so that we may benefit from the holy discourse in the former and snatch ourselves unharmed (125d) from the devil's wiles. If this is the way we devote our care and attention to our own salvation, we will be able to reap benefit from fasting, escape the snares of the Evil one, and win abundant favor from above. May it be the good fortune of us all to enjoy this, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen.

15. Ex 23.1 according to the LXX.

16. Ps 101.5, the future sense of the Heb. imperfect in this case (by contrast with instances referred to in note 8 above) escaping the LXX.

17. Ps 50.20.

HOMILY 16

On the Fall of the first human beings.
"They were both naked, Adam and his wife, without feeling shame."[1]

WOULD LIKE TODAY, dearly beloved, to open up for you spiritual treasure, which though distributed is never fully exhausted, (126a) which though bringing riches to everyone is in no way diminished but even increased. You see, just as in the case of material treasure people able to collect even a tiny nugget acquire for themselves great wealth, so too in the case of Sacred Scripture you can find in even a brief phrase great power of thought and wealth beyond telling. Such, after all, is the nature of this treasure: it enriches those receiving it without itself ever failing, rising as it does from the source which is the Holy Spirit. It remains for you, however, to keep careful guard on what is entrusted to you and preserve the memory of it untarnished so that you may with ease follow what is said, provided we make our contribution zealously. Grace, you see, is ready at hand and looks only for people welcoming it with generosity. (126b) Let us listen today also to what is read so that we may come to know of God's unspeakable love for humanity and the extent of the considerateness he employs with our salvation in mind.

(2) "They were both naked, Adam and his wife, without feeling shame." Consider, I ask you, the transcendence of their blessed condition, how they were superior to all bodily concerns, how they lived on earth as if they were in heaven, and though in fact possessing a body they did not feel the limitations of their bodies. After all, they had no need of shelter or habitation, clothing or anything of that kind. It was not idly

1. Gn 2.25.

or to no purpose that Sacred Scripture indicated this to us; it was that we might learn of this carefree condition of theirs, their trouble-free life and angelic condition, as you might say, and that (126c) we might attribute it completely to their indifference when later we see them bereft of all these advantages and, as it were, reduced to the utmost indigence after the great abundance of their wealth.

(3) We must, however, listen to the words that have been read. Blessed Moses, remember, told us that they were naked without feeling shame (for they did not know, after all, that they were naked, clad as they were in ineffable glory, which adorned them better than any clothing), and added: "But the serpent was the wiliest of all the beasts upon the earth made by the Lord. The serpent said to the woman: 'Why is it that God said, Do not eat of any tree of the garden?'"[2] See the evil spirit's envy and devious scheming. I mean, he saw that the human being, creature though he was, had the good fortune to enjoy the highest esteem and was scarcely inferior in any respect to the angels, as blessed David also says, "You have placed him on a level scarcely lower than (126d) the angels,"[3] and even this "scarcely lower" was the result of disobedience, the inspired author, after all, uttering this after the disobedience. The author of evil, accordingly, seeing an angel who happened to live on earth, was consumed by envy, since he himself had once enjoyed a place among the powers above but had been cast down from that pinnacle on account of his depravity of will and excess of wickedness. So he employed considerable skill so as to pluck the human being from God's favor, render him ungrateful and divest him of all those goods provided for him through God's loving kindness. What did he do? He discovered this wild animal, namely, the serpent, overcoming the other animals by his cunning, as blessed Moses also testified in the words, "The serpent was the wiliest of all the beasts on the earth (127a) made by the Lord God." He made use of this creature like some instrument and through it inveigled that naive and weaker vessel, namely, woman, into

2. Gn 3.1. 3. Ps 8.5.

his deception by means of conversation. "The serpent spoke to the woman," the text says.

(4) Consider from this, dearly beloved, how in the beginning none of the wild beasts then existing caused fear either to the man or to the woman; on the contrary, they recognized human direction and dominion, and as with tame animals these days, so then even the wild and savage ones proved to be subdued. But perhaps in this case some may raise a difficulty and seek to find out if the wild animals also shared the power of speech. Not so—perish the thought; rather, people, following Scripture, need to consider the fact that the words came from the devil, who was spurred on to this deception by his own ill-will, while this wild animal he employed like some convenient instrument (127b) so as to be able to set the bait for his own deception and thus upset the woman first of all, being ever more readily susceptible of deception,[4] and then, through her, man the first-formed. So he employs this irrational animal for laying his plan, and by means of it he speaks to the woman in these words: "'Why is it that God said, Do not eat of any tree of the garden?'" Notice in this case the extreme subtlety of his malice: in the unfolding of his planning and inquiry he introduces words not spoken by God and acts as though motivated by care for them. This, in fact, is what emerges from his words, "'Why is it that God said, Do not eat of any tree in the garden?'" As if the evil demon were saying, Why did he deprive you of such enjoyment? Why does he not allow you to share in the good things in the garden instead of granting you the pleasure of looking at them while not permitting you to possess them and (127c) thus gain the greater enjoyment? "'Why is it that God said?'" What, he is saying, is the reason for this? What is the advantage of life in the gar-

4. Chrysostom's sexism, which is something of a problem for the translator throughout the homilies and is a feature of this second creation story in particular, we have noted in Introduction 14. This present disparaging remark (not supported by the scriptural text, needless to say) begins a trend in the narrative, and betrays also Chrysostom's moralizing tendency that will place Eve at center stage in the account of the Fall. With this, Chrysostom's soulmate, Paul, for all his bad reputation would not have been pleased.

den when you aren't free to enjoy the things in it, but are even worse off in incurring the more intense pain of having sight of things but missing out on the enjoyment that comes from possessing them?

(5) Do you see how he uses the words like a bait to inject his poison? The woman should have been able from his very approach to recognize the extremity of his frenzy and the fact that he deliberately said what was not the case and made a pretence of care for them as part of his plan so as to be in a position to find out the instructions they had been given by God, and thus lead them to their downfall. So he did not want her to be able to recognize his trickery immediately and thus abandon converse with him as being idle speech and so avoid being dragged down to a low level. After all, there was no need for her (127d) to get involved in conversation with him in the first place; she should rather have conversed with the person for whose sake she came into being, with whom she shared everything on equal terms, and whose helpmate she had been made.

(6) But acting impetuously—how, I know not—she got involved in conversation with the serpent and through him as through an instrument she took in the devil's deadly words; so it ensued that she learnt from the devil's speech the very opposite to the words' real sense, and that whereas the Creator gave one set of directions, the devil said the opposite to the Creator about avoiding him, quitting further conversation with him and having only abhorrence for the creature presuming to sharpen his tongue against the direction given to them. In fact, through her grave negligence she not only failed to turn away but revealed the whole secret of the Lord's direction, thus casting pearls before swine and (128a) fulfilling what was said by Christ: "Don't cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, turn on you and tear you to pieces,"[5] as in fact happened in this case. I mean, she exposed to swine, to that evil beast, that is, to the demon acting through it, the divine pearls; he not only trampled on

5. Mt 7.6.

them and opposed them with his words, but turned and led into the rupture of disobedience not only her but also the first-formed man with her. Such is the evil of idly and casually exposing to all and sundry the divine mysteries. Let those give heed who idly and indiscriminately open their mouths to everyone.

(7) Christ, after all, is not talking about real swine in that verse, but referring to people who behave like swine and, in the manner of animals, roll in the mire of sin; (128b) he thus teaches us to recognize differences in people and look to the propriety of their life style whenever it is necessary to keep secret any of the divine sayings, lest we bring harm on them and ourselves. Such people, after all, not only reap no benefit from what is said, but oftentimes even drag down into the same depths of ruin as themselves those who incautiously offer them these beautiful pearls. Hence we must guard them scrupulously lest we suffer the same fate as those who are deceived in this regard. You see, if in the present instance also the woman had decided not to offer pearls to swine, she would not have fallen into the abyss herself nor dragged her husband down with her.

(8) Let us, however, listen to what she says to him in reply. That is, when he said, "'Why is it that God said, Do not eat of any tree of the garden?'" (128c) the woman replied to the serpent, "'We do eat of every tree of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, Do not eat or even touch it in case you die.'"[6] Do you see his malice? He said what was not the case so as to entice her into conversation with him and thus learn what was the case. The woman, you see, is evidently encouraged as though he were kindly disposed to her, and she reveals the whole of the instruction, tells him all in detail, and by her reply deprives herself of any excuse. I mean, what could you say in your defense, woman? "'God said, Do not eat of any tree in the garden.'" You ought to have turned away from the speaker and said to him, Be off, you are a cheat, you do not know the force of the direction given us,

6. Gn 3.2–3.

nor the extent of the enjoyment we have, nor the abundance of good things given us. For your part you said God (128d) has told us to taste nothing of any tree, whereas out of his great goodness the Lord and Creator has permitted us enjoyment and control of them all, bidding us keep away only from one, and this likewise out of great care for us lest we taste it and die. You should, had you been in your right mind, have addressed these words to him, turned away from him utterly, and have had nothing to do with him nor listened to anything said by him.

(9) Instead, however, she revealed the secret of the instruction and told him what God had said to them, and thus received from him a different kind of advice, bringing ruin and death. That is to say, when the woman said, "'We do eat of every tree of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, Do not eat or even touch it,'" that evil creature, enemy of our (129a) salvation, in his turn offered advice at odds with that of the Lord. You see, whereas the loving God had forbidden their tasting that fruit on account of his great care for them lest they be subject to death for their disobedience, that evil creature said to the woman, "'You will not truly die.'"[7] What kind of excuse could anyone find appropriate to the woman for being prepared to give her complete attention to the creature that spoke with such temerity? I mean, after God said, "'Do not touch it lest you die,'" he said, "'You will not truly die.'" Then, not being satisfied with contradicting the words of God, he goes on to misrepresent the Creator as jealous so as to be in a position to introduce deceit by this means, get the better of the woman and carry out his own purpose. "'You will not truly die,'" he said. "'God, you see, knows that on the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.'"[8] (129b) See all the bait he offered: he filled the cup with a harmful drug and gave it to the woman, who did not want to recognize its deadly character. She could have known this from the outset, had she wanted; instead, she lis-

7. Gn 3:4. 8. Gn 3:5.

tened to his word, that God forbade their tasting the fruit for that reason—"'He knows that your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil'"—puffed up as she was with the hope of being equal to God and evidently dreaming of greatness.

(10) Such, after all, are the stratagems of the enemy: whenever he lures someone to a great height through deceit, at that very point he casts them down into a deep abyss. The woman, you see, had dreams of equality with God and hastened to taste the fruit; she had evidently set her mind and her thinking on that goal, and she thought of nothing else than how to drink the cup prepared for her by the wicked demon. That is to say, listen to the account Scripture gives so as to learn that she was bent on this course after receiving that deadly poison through the serpent's advice. (129c) "The woman saw that the tree was good for eating, pleasing for the eyes to behold, and attractive to contemplate. She took some of its fruit and ate it."[9] True it is that "evil converse corrupts good behavior."[10] Why was it, after all, that before that wicked demon's advice she entertained no such idea, had no eyes for the tree, nor noticed its attractiveness? Because she feared God's direction and the punishment likely to follow from tasting the fruit; now, however, when she was deceived by this evil creature into thinking that not only would they not come to any harm from this but would even be equal to God, then evidently hope of gaining the promised reward drove her to taste it. Not content to remain within her own proper limits, but considering the enemy and foe of her salvation (129d) to be more trustworthy than God's words, she learned shortly afterwards through her own experience the lethal effect of such advice and the disaster brought on them from tasting the fruit. The text says, remember, "She saw the tree was good for eating, pleasing for the eyes to behold and attractive to contemplate," and she reasoned with herself, probably from the devil's deceit which he

9. Gn 3.6, where the LXX's "attractive to contemplate, ripe for contemplation" departs somewhat from a difficult Hebrew phrase.

10. Paul's quotation of Menander's *Thais* at 1 Cor 15.33.

proposed to her through the serpent: If the tree is good for eating, can so delight the eyes and has some indefinable attractiveness about it, while tasting it provides us with the highest esteem, and we will have honor equal to the Creator, why should we not taste it?

(11) Do you see how the devil led her captive, handicapped her reasoning, and caused her to set her thoughts on goals beyond her real capabilities, in order that she might be puffed up with empty hopes (130a) and lose her hold on the advantages already accorded her? "She took some of its fruit," the text says, "and ate it; she gave it to her husband also, and they both ate it. Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked."[11] O woman, what have you done? You have not only followed that deadly counsel literally and trampled on the law imposed on you by God, spurning his instruction and treating it with such displeasure as to be discontented with such great enjoyment, but you have also presumed to take fruit from the one tree which the Lord bade you not to lay hold of, you put faith in the words of the serpent, you regarded its advice worthy of greater heed than the instruction given you by the Creator, and have been ensnared in such awful deception as to be incapable of any claim to excuse. Surely you're not, after all, of the same nature as the one who offered you the advice? He happened in fact to be one of those under your control, (130b) one of the servants placed by providence under your authority. Such being the case, why did you disgrace yourself, departing from the one for whom you were created, as whose helpmate you were made, in whose dignity you had equal share, one with him in being and one in language—why then did you agree to enter into converse with the serpent, and by means of this creature accept the advice of the devil, which was plainly at variance with the Creator's injunction, without being turned aside from such evil intent, but rather presuming to taste the fruit through hope of what had been promised?

11. Gn 3.6–7 in the LXX rendering, which has both men and women eating together, not man on his own—perhaps accounting for the following diatribe against the woman alone.

(12) Well and good, then: so you cast yourself into such an abyss and robbed yourself of your pre-eminent dignity. Why did you make your husband a partner in this grievous disaster, why prove to be the temptress of the person whose helpmate you were intended to be, and why for a tiny morsel alienate him along with yourself from the favor of God? What excess of folly (130c) led you to such heights of presumption? Wasn't it sufficient for you to pass your life without care or concern, clad in a body yet free of any bodily needs? to enjoy everything in the garden except for one tree? to have all visible things under your own authority and to exercise control over them all? Did you instead, deceived as you were by vain hopes, set your heart on reaching the very pinnacle of power? On that account you will discover through experience itself that not only will you fail to achieve that goal but you will rob yourself and your husband of everything already given you, you will fall into such depths of remorse that you will regret your failed intentions while that wicked demon, responsible for concocting that deadly plan, will mock and insult you for falling victim to him and incurring the same fate as he. I mean, just as he had ideas above his station, (130d) was carried away to a degree beyond what was granted him, and so fell from heaven to earth, in just the same way did you have in mind to proceed, and by your transgression of the command were brought to the punishment of death, giving free rein to your own envy, as some sage has said: "By the devil's envy death entered the world."[12]

(13) Our text says, "She gave it to her husband also, and they both ate it. Their eyes were opened." Great was the man's indifference, too: even though like him she was human and his wife as well, still he should have kept God's law intact and given it preference before her improper greed, and not joined her as a partner in her fall nor deprived himself of such benefits on account of a brief pleasure, offending his benefactor who had also shown him so much loving kindness and had (131a) regaled him with a life so free of pain and relieved of

12. Wis 2.24.

all distress. After all, were you not free to enjoy everything else in the garden in generous measure? Why did you not choose for yourself to keep the command that was so easy? Instead, you probably listened to the promise contained in the deadly advice coming from your wife, and buoyed up in your turn with hope you readily shared in the food. As a result you incur the penalty from each other, and experience teaches you not to place greater importance on the wicked demon's advice than on God.[13]

(14) "She gave it to her husband also, and they both ate it. Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked." At this point an important question arises, which I promised you, my dear people, yesterday to deal with. What I mean is (131b) that someone could ask what particular quality was it which that tree had that resulted in the opening of their eyes from eating it, and why is it called the knowledge of good and evil. Wait a while, if you don't mind: I want to discuss this, too, with you for a moment and teach you, dear people, that, if we wanted to welcome the contents of Sacred Scripture with grateful hearts, nothing of what is said there would seem difficult. What I mean is that it wasn't the eating from the tree that opened their eyes: they could see even before eating. Instead, the eating from this tree was the symptom of their disobedience and the breaking of the command given by God; and through their guilt they consequently divested themselves of the glory surrounding them, rendering themselves unworthy of such wonderful esteem. Hence Scripture takes up the point in its customary way with the words, (131c) "They both ate. Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked;" because of the Fall, they were stripped of grace from above, and they felt the sense of their obvious nakedness so that through the shame that overcame them they might know precisely what peril they had been led into by breaking the Lord's command. You see, before this they had enjoyed such

13. Is it chauvinism alone, or Chrysostom's moral purpose so obsessed with Eve's moral behavior, that accounts for Adam's light rebuke? In this case Chrysostom is not at one with Paul, author of Rom 5 and a writer of primarily dogmatic concerns.

confidence and were not aware that they happened to be naked (actually, they were not really naked: the glory from above garbed them better than any garment), whereas after eating—that is, after transgression of what had been commanded—they fell into such baseness that they then looked for some covering through not being able to bear their shame. You see, transgression of the command entered the scene and snatched away that novel and remarkable garment—I mean the glory and favor from above (131d) enveloping them—and it both lent them an awareness of their nakedness and also clad them in unspeakable shame.

(15) "They stitched together fig leaves," the text goes on, "and made themselves skirts."[14] Consider, I ask you, dearly beloved, what height they had fallen from and how the devil's advice had cast them into a deep abyss. Whereas, you see, they had been clothed in such glory, now they stitch together fig leaves and make themselves skirts. This is the advantage to be gained from the devil's deceit, this is the scope of his advice—not merely to fail to provide greater benefits but to render us naked and devoid of those we have. Since therefore such a pretext of eating led to disobedience, Scripture accordingly says, "They ate, and their eyes were opened," referring not to the eyes of the senses but to their mental awareness. You see, once they disobeyed (132a) what had been commanded, they were now made to become aware of things that previously they had no awareness of on account of the benevolence of the Lord shown to them. So when you hear that "Their eyes were opened," understand it in the sense that he saw to it that they would now experience their nakedness and the loss of the glory they enjoyed before eating. To be sure that this is the way with Scripture, listen to what it says elsewhere as well: when Sarah's maid ran away from service and got lost, she flung her child down next to a log and from a distance she thought about his approaching demise in these words, "God opened the eyes"[15] of Hagar, not because she could not see before then but because he awakened her mind. Do you see

14. Gn 3.7. 15. Gn 21.19.

that the word "opened" refers not to our bodily eyes but to mental awareness?

(16) We would (132b) make the same point in regard to the other question that arises at this stage. That is, they ask, Why was it called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? There are, you see, many people bent on controversy who endeavor to maintain that after eating from the tree Adam had knowledge to discriminate between good and evil—an opinion of the utmost absurdity. I mean, in view of this and foreseeing it earlier, we dealt with many aspects of the intelligence granted the human being by God, demonstrating it from the imposition of names which he gave to all the animals, the birds and the brute beasts, and the fact that he was endowed with prophetic grace along with this ineffable intelligence lest anyone come up with such an opinion. This person, therefore, who both imposed names and gave vent to that so remarkable prophecy about the woman, as we have already mentioned—how could he have been ignorant of what is good (132c) and what is evil? I mean, if we admitted that (God forbid), once again would blasphemous references be directed to the Creator. How, after all, could an ignorant person be commanded that transgression is wrong? This, however, is not the case—perish the thought; on the contrary, he knew quite well. It was, after all, on that account that God from the outset equipped this creature with independence: if this had not been the case, he ought not have been punished when he broke the command nor considered worthy of praise for keeping it. You see, the fact that he fell under death's sway on account of the fall is clear both from the command itself and from what happened later. Listen, in fact, to the woman in person speaking to the serpent: "'From fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden,'" God said, "'You are not to eat, lest you die.'" It follows that before eating they were in fact not subject to death; if this were not the case, he would not have imposed death on them by way of a penalty after the eating.

(17) Who therefore (132d) could bear with those people who insist on saying that the human being had knowledge of good and evil after eating from the tree, that creature who be-

fore such eating was liberally endowed with intelligence, and along with intelligence had been granted also the prophetic gift? How do these two things make sense—on the one hand, knowing goats and sheep and all the species of brute beasts, what vegetation was suitable for food and what was harmful, which types to keep away from sedulously and which ones to approach; and, on the other hand, the idea that the human being, this rational creature, should be unaware of what is good and what is evil? But behold, they say, it was Scripture that called it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I know that, too: but if you are prepared to learn the characteristics of Sacred Scripture, you will know why it gave this name to the tree. You see, it wasn't because it supplied knowledge that it is called that, but because (133a) the transgression of the command happened to concern the tree, and from that event knowledge of sin then entered the scene, and shame as well—that was why the name was given. It is, after all, the way with Sacred Scripture to name places from the things that happen, wherever it is they happen. So on this basis Sacred Scripture also named the tree of the knowledge of good and evil since transgression and observance of the command concerned the tree.

(18) The loving Lord, you see, instructing the human being in the beginning and from the very outset, and wanting to teach him that he has a creator and craftsman who produces all visible realities and shapes him as well, wished to reveal to him his own dominion through this slight command. To make a comparison with a generous master who provides a great home full of wonders for someone's enjoyment: (133b) he is prepared to take not the due price but some small part so as in his own interests to protect his title of dominion and to ensure that the person may have precise understanding that he is not owner of the property but enjoys its use out of his grace and beneficence. In just the same way does our Lord entrust everything to the human being, providing him with a way of life in the garden and enjoyment of everything in it; lest he be gradually perverted in his thinking and come to regard visible things as self-sufficient and get inflated ideas of his own im-

portance, he bids him stay away from the one tree, setting a severe penalty for transgression so that he may be aware he is under his dominion and along with everything else is a partaker of his generosity. Since, however, he was guilty of great inadvertence and together with his wife (133c) fell into this disaster through transgression of the command given him by tasting of the tree, accordingly it called it the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—not because he was ignorant of good and evil before this (he was, after all, not so ignorant, since his wife in conversation with the serpent said, "'God said, Do not eat of it lest you die,'" so that he knew death was the penalty for breaking the command), but because after eating it they were divested of the glory from above and also had experience of their obvious nakedness. This was the reason it called it the knowledge of good and evil, since in connection with it there took place the contest, as you might say, between obedience and disobedience.

(19) Have you discovered why it said, "Their eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked"? Do you know why (133d) the tree is called the knowledge of good and evil? Consider, after all, how much shame they were eventually seized with after eating it and thus breaking the Lord's command: "They stitched fig leaves together, and made themselves skirts." See the depths of indignity into which they fell from a condition of such great glory. Those who previously passed their life like angels on earth contrive covering for themselves out of fig leaves. Such is the evil that sin is: not only does it deprive us of grace from above, but it also casts us into deep shame and abjection, strips us of goods already belonging to us, and deprives us of all confidence.

(20) But in case we make this sermon completely melancholy by going on and on about this sin that consisted of eating of the tree and of the disobedience overwhelming the human being, come now, if you don't mind, (134a) let us change the topic from the tree to that other one, from this tree to the tree of the Cross, and let us see what harm the former caused and what good the latter introduced. Rather, it was not the tree that caused the harm, but slothful will and contempt dis-

played for God's command. The former tree brought death, death entering the scene after the Fall, remember, whereas the latter endowed us with immortality; one drove us from paradise, the other led us up to heaven; the former rendered Adam liable to such a terrible penalty for one transgression, whereas the latter freed us from the countless burdens of our sins and restored to us confidence in the Lord's sight.[16] Do you see the difference between the one tree and the other? do you see the devil's malice, man's indifference, and the Lord's loving kindness? Accordingly, let us arm ourselves, I beg you, dear people, with the armor of this lifegiving tree, (134b) and in its power let us do to death deadly passions, as the Apostle also instructs us in these words: "Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts."[17] What he means is this: people giving themselves completely to Christ have crucified every improper desire affecting the flesh and risking impairment to the soul's whole vitality. Let us too imitate these people and put our bodies on the alert against the tyranny imposed on us by the devil's activity so that even in this present life we may cross this rough and dangerous ocean serenely, put in to the calm haven of God's love, and be deemed worthy to attain the good things promised to those who love him, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, now and forever, for ages of ages. Amen. (134c)

16. It is precisely this sort of dogmatic study of the Fall, dear to Paul, that is conspicuously missing from Chrysostom's moral treatment; so after a few sentences he lapses again into moral consideration.

17. Gal 5.24.

HOMILY 17

"They heard the sound of the Lord God as he strolled in the garden in the evening."[1]

WE HAVE SAID ENOUGH, I would think, as far as our abilities lie, in giving our explanation lately of the tree, to teach you, dearly beloved, what was the reason why Sacred Scripture called it the knowledge of good and evil. So today I want to proceed to what follows, so that you may learn God's unspeakable love and the degree of considerateness he employs in his care for our race. Everything, you see, he made and arranged so that this rational being created by him had the good fortune to be of the greatest importance, and far from being in any way inferior to the life of the angels, enjoyed in the body their immunity from suffering.

(2) When, however, he saw them both through negligence transgress the commands he had given them, despite the warnings he had conveyed by threatening them (134d) and putting them more on the alert, he did not stop loving them at that point. Instead, faithful to his own goodness, he is like a loving father who sees his own son through negligence committing things unworthy of his upbringing and being reduced from his eminent position to the utmost depravity: he is stirred to the depths of his being as a father, yet, far from ceasing to care for him, he displays further concern for him in his desire to extricate him gradually from his abasement and return him to his previous position of dignity. Well, in just the same way does the good God, too, have pity on man for the plot to which he fell victim with his wife after being deceived and accepting the devil's advice through the serpent. Like a

1. Gn 3.8.

doctor treating a sick and suffering patient confined to bed, who needs much healing and the doctor's attention, he goes immediately to his side.

(3) In order, however, that you may learn (135a) God's ineffable considerateness, from the words themselves you must listen to the reading. "They heard the sound of the Lord God," the text says, "as he strolled in the garden in the evening; both Adam and his wife hid from the Lord's presence amongst the trees of the garden." Let us not, dearly beloved, pass heedlessly by the words from Sacred Scripture, nor remain at the level of their expression, but consider that the ordinariness of their expression occurs with our limitations in mind and that everything is done in a manner befitting God for the sake of our salvation.[2] I mean, tell me this: were we prepared to follow the drift of the words without taking what is said in a sense befitting God, how could many absurdities be avoided? See now, let us consider this from the very beginning of the reading: "They heard the sound (135b) of the Lord God," the text says, "as he strolled in the garden in the evening, and they hid." What are you saying—God strolls? Are we assigning feet to him? Have we no exalted conception of him? No, God doesn't stroll—perish the thought: how could he, present as he is everywhere and filling everything with his presence? Can he, for whom heaven is his throne and earth his footstool, be confined to the garden? What right-minded person could say this?

(4) So what is the meaning of this statement, "They heard the sound of the Lord God as he strolled in the garden in the evening"? He wanted to provide them with such an experience as would induce in them a state of anguish, which in fact happened: they had so striking an experience that they tried to hide from the presence of God. Sin, you see, appeared and

2. For an Antiochene like Chrysostom, anthropomorphisms represented a particular challenge to the delicate balance of the two correlatives to his theology of the Word—divine transcendence and considerateness for human limitations. This particularly striking example of anthropomorphism of Gn 3.8 illustrated the latter eminently, but Chrysostom urges his congregation not to take it so simplistically as to impugn that other factor, the transcendence of the divine author.

transgression, and they were covered in confusion. After all, that incorruptible judge—conscience, I mean—in taking a stand against the accused (135c) cried out in unmistakable tones, levelled its accusation, brought forward evidence, and as if before their very eyes wrote down details of their sins in all their magnitude. For this reason, you see, the loving Lord from on high, in forming human beings right from the beginning, implanted conscience in them as a tireless accuser, proof against dissuasion and deception at any time.

(5) Even if someone were able to escape the notice of all human beings in committing sin and perpetrating improper conduct, he could not escape that accuser; he would go his wicked way with this accuser ever present within him to trouble him, tear at him and flay him, never resting, be it in public, in company, at table, sleeping or rising, demanding justice for felonies committed, bringing into focus the impropriety of sin (135d) and the punishment due to it. Like a skilful physician it does not cease from applying its remedies; and should it find itself rebuffed, it does not take no for an answer but continues its ministrations unremittingly. This, after all, is its role, to make memory proof against dissuasion and not permit us to lay our sins to rest but keep them in focus so that even by this means it may make us reluctant to fall into the same ones again. You see, if we find an ally in conscience and get assistance from it as the forthright accuser innate within us, our scourge, tearing at our vitals, bringing more weight to bear on us than a public executioner, and yet in many cases we still fall victims to our indifference, to what extremes would we not be taken if we were deprived of such assistance?

(6) This, then, is the reason why (136a) in the present case the first-formed human being immediately hides on receiving this impression and realizing the presence of the Lord. Why so, tell me? Because he saw that stern accuser—conscience, I mean—taking his position against him. He had no one else as prosecutor and witness of his felonies with the sole exception of the one that he carried around within him. They were, however, taught through their nakedness the magnitude of

the sins they had committed by the removal of the glory that had previously draped them like a garment, as well as by the accusation of conscience. So since they were covered in confusion after that grievous sin, they tried to hide. "They heard the sound of the Lord God," the text says, "as he strolled in the garden in the evening; both Adam and his wife hid from the Lord's presence in the middle of the garden."

(7) Nothing is worse than sin, dearly beloved: once it appears (136b) it not merely fills us with shame but also robs of their senses people previously sensible and full of great intelligence. I mean, consider, I ask you, the depth of folly now displayed by this person previously endowed with intelligence, who had demonstrated the intelligence granted him in the actions he performed, and who had given vent to such inspired utterances. "Hearing the sound of the Lord God," the text says, "as he strolled in the garden in the evening, he and his wife hid from the Lord's presence amongst the trees of the garden." What depths of folly does this not reveal—for this man to endeavor to hide from the God who is present everywhere, the Creator who brings all things from non-being into being, who knows things that lie hidden, who alone fashions people's hearts and understands all their works,[3] who tests hearts and minds,[4] who understands the movements of our heart?[5] (136c) But do not wonder, dearly beloved. For that is the nature of sinners. Even if they are not able to hide, they try earnestly to hide. That you may know that they did this because they had been denuded of their glory, unable to endure the shame which enveloped them after their sin, consider where they hid themselves: In the midst of paradise. Just like heedless slaves and ones due for a whipping, when they are unable to hide from their master, try to run hither and thither into the corners of the house when their minds are shaking with fear, likewise these two ran around in that abode, that is in Paradise, but without finding any escape.

(8) It is not without purpose, however, that the time is speci-

3. Ps 33.15.
4. Ps 7.9.
5. Cf. Ps 43.22.

fied: "They heard the sound of the Lord God," the text says, remember, "as he strolled in the garden in the evening." The purpose was for you to learn the Lord's loving kindness, that he didn't postpone action in the slightest; instead, once he saw what had happened and sized up the gravity of the ulcer, he at once set in motion the healing process (136d) lest the ulcer spread and open up an incurable wound. So he moved to catch it at an early stage and at once took action against the spread of the ulcer, not for a moment leaving the victim deprived of his prompt attention, out of fidelity to his own goodness. What I mean is that the enemy of our salvation had displayed such rage in his unfailing envy of our advantages that he concocted his plot from the very beginning and, through his disastrous advice, he robbed those two of their wonderful way of life. But God, ever anxious to try something new, watching over our affairs in his wisdom, saw, on the one hand, the malice practiced by the devil and, on the other hand, the man's negligence, which was the means of covering him in such shame once he had been prevailed on by his wife; so God takes his position as a gentle and loving judge presiding over a tribunal that causes fear and trembling, and conducts his examination in detail—teaching us through this approach not (137a) to condemn our fellows before we have conducted a detailed examination.

(9) So let us listen, if you don't mind, to the questions the judge asks, what replies the accused make, the severity of the sentence they receive, and the extent of the condemnation judged appropriate for the one who delivered such dreadful advice to them. Keep your mind alert, I beg you, and with great trepidation heed what is said. After all, we watch an earthly judge seated on his lofty tribunal summoning the accused into the court, flailing them and inflicting other punishments on them, and in much trembling we insist on standing by to hear what the judge says and the accused in his turn replies. So much the more in this case is it proper that we should do this, watching the Creator of our race doing justice to those created by him. If, however, (137b) you attend with precision, you will see how great is the difference between God's

loving kindness and human beings' severity towards their fellows.

(10) "The Lord God called Adam and said to him, 'Adam, where are you?'"[6] From the very enquiry it behooves us to marvel at God's surpassing love, not so much that he called him, but that he personally called him—something human beings would never stoop to in the case of their fellows who share the same nature with themselves. I mean, you know that when they take their seat on the lofty tribunal and do justice to those guilty of felonies, they don't consider the accused worthy of having a reply made in their own person; consequently, they let them see how much disrepute they have incurred through committing these crimes. While the judge makes his response somebody else stands up and relays the words of the judge to the accused, and in turn reports his words to the judge. (137c) Such you would see to be the practice of judges the world over. With God, however, this is not the case. Instead? He calls personally: "The Lord God called Adam," the text says, "and said to him, 'Adam, where are you?'"

(11) See how much force lies concealed in this brief expression. You see, the very act of calling is a mark of great love beyond all telling, as it is a mark of great goodness to give an opportunity of reply to the accused in his shame, who dares not open his mouth or loosen his tongue. Yet, along with this loving kindness, the question, "'Where are you?'" is also very telling. In other words, it is as if he hinted to him in these words, What has happened? I left you in one condition, whereas now I find you in another; I left you clad in glory, whereas now I find you in nakedness.

(12) "'Where are you?'" How did this happen to you? Who has brought you to this changed condition? (137d) What kind of robber and brigand has robbed you like this in an instant of all the substance of your wealth and cast you into such indigence? Whence has come the nakedness you are experiencing? Who is responsible for depriving you of that wonderful

6. Gn 3.9.

garment you had the good fortune to wear? What is this sudden transformation? What tempest has all at once in this way sunk all your precious cargo? What has happened to make you try to hide yourself from the one who has been so kind to you and placed you in a position of such importance? Who is it you are now endeavoring to avoid through fear? Surely, after all, no one has cause to accuse you? Surely, after all, no witnesses are testifying against you? Whence comes the fear and dread that overwhelms you? "'I heard the sound,'" the text says, "'as you walked in the garden, I was afraid because I am naked, and I hid.'"[7] Whence comes the knowledge of your nakedness? Tell me: what is new and surprising? Who could ever have told you of this, (138a) unless you have become the guilty cause of your own shame, unless you have eaten from that one tree I told you not to eat from?

(13) See the Lord's loving kindness and the surpassing degree of his long-suffering. I mean, though being in a position to begrudge such a great sinner the right of reply and rather than to consign him at once to the punishment he had determined on in anticipation of his transgressing, he shows patience and withholds action: he asks a question, receives a reply, and questions him further as if inviting him to excuse himself so that he might seize the opportunity to display his characteristic love in regard to the sinner even despite his fall. He thus teaches us through this instance as well when we judge the guilty not to berate them harshly or display the savagery of wild beasts in their regard, but rather employ much long-suffering and mercy inasmuch as we are dispensing justice to our own members, and out of a sense of kinship we should temper justice with love. (138b) After all, it is not without purpose that Sacred Scripture employs such great considerateness; instead, through the concreteness of the expressions it both teaches us God's loving kindness and promotes our emulation so that we may imitate as far as human capacity allows the goodness of the Lord. "He said to him, 'Who told you that you are naked—unless you have eaten from that one

7. Gn 3.10.

tree I told you not to eat from?'"[8] Where could you have got the knowledge of this, he says, and be covered in such confusion, unless you have been so intemperate as to despise my command?

(14) Notice, dearly beloved, the excess of God's goodness, how, in this manner of one friend communing with another and remonstrating with him over transgression of his instructions, he enters into dialog with Adam. "'Who told you that you are naked—unless you have eaten from that one tree I told you not to eat from?'" (138c) Even the phrase, "that one tree," bears a slight nuance: Surely I didn't inhibit your enjoyment? it is saying. Did I not relieve you of every need, give you authority over everything in the garden, and only instruct you to keep away from that one thing so that you might be in a position to know that you are subject to direction and required to show some obedience? So what kind of terrible indifference is this that, despite your having such great enjoyment, you could not bear to keep away from that one thing but rather hastened in that manner to violate the command given you by me and envelop yourself in so many excesses?

(15) What good was that to you? Hadn't I warned you of that in advance? Wasn't it my intention to check you beforehand with fear of punishment and so make you more cautious? Didn't I tell you what would be likely to happen? Didn't I for that reason forbid your eating that fruit so that you wouldn't fall victim to those faults? Who could consider you deserving of excuse now that you've proved to be so unresponsive despite so many directions? (138d) Didn't I thus instruct you in every detail, like a father to his own dear son, and teach you to keep away from this tree while being free to taste all the others lest it wreak havoc with all your endowments?

(16) Perhaps, however, you have thought advice from another quarter acceptable and to be preferred to my command, and followed it in the expectation of gaining greater

8. Gn 3.11—with some slight anacoluthon smoothed over in other LXX manuscripts.

advantages, and out of scorn for my command you were bold enough to eat from the tree. See what you suffered through that experiment: you discovered the disastrous effect of that advice. Do you see the loving kindness of the judge? Do you see his mildness and long-suffering? Do you see his considerateness stretching beyond all thought and imagination? Do you see how through his question and the words, "'Who told you that you are naked—unless you have eaten from that one tree I told you not to eat from?'" he wanted to open to you the doors to excuse so that even in regard to such a sinful person (139a) he might show his characteristic love? So let us listen to the accused as well, and hear what he has to say in reply to this question.

(17) "Adam said," the text goes on, "'The woman you gave me as my companion gave me fruit from the tree and I ate it.'"[9] Pitiable words and full of much pity, and capable of moving the Lord to clemency, He who is so gentle, overcoming our sins by his goodness. For when he had shaken his disposition by a great display of tolerance and had shown him the magnitude of his sin, Adam all but preparing his own defense, said to Him, "'the woman you gave me as my companion.'" (139b) In other words, how could I have ever expected that I would have been so covered in confusion through the one you created with the very purpose of bringing me consolation from her person? You gave her to me, you led her to meet me. She—I know not under what impulse—in her turn gave me fruit from the tree and I ate it.

(18) While this explanation seems to offer some excuse, it is in fact devoid of all defense. I mean, what defense can you lay claim to, he says, for forgetting my commands and judging the bauble given by your wife more important than words spoken by me? After all, even if your wife did give it to you, still my command and the fear of punishment were sufficient to dispose you to avoid tasting. I mean, surely you were not ignorant? Surely you weren't unaware? With this in mind, out

9. Gn 3.12.

of care for you, I spoke up with the aim of preventing your falling victim to these faults; and so, even if your wife prepared the way for your transgressing my command, nevertheless you were not without guilt: you should have regarded (139c) my command as more worthy of trust, and, beyond dissuading yourself alone from eating, you should have demonstrated the gravity of the sin to your wife as well. After all, you are head of your wife,[10] and she has been created for your sake; but you have inverted the proper order: not only have you failed to keep her on the straight and narrow but you have been dragged down with her, and whereas the rest of the body should follow the head, the contrary has in fact occurred, the head following the rest of the body, turning things upside down. Hence, since you have reversed the proper order completely, you now find yourself in that desperate situation after being clad previously in such wonderful splendor. So who could adequately lament the loss you have sustained of such great benefits?

(19) But, all the same, even if all these things have befallen you, put the blame on no one else but yourself and your own neglect; after all, if you had not been willing, your wife would have been unable to bring you to this disastrous state. I mean, surely she didn't urge you? Surely she didn't inveigle you? Surely she didn't deceive you? She merely gave (139d) you the fruit, and in an instant with such ease you were prevailed upon to taste it, without a thought to my command; instead, you thought you had been taken in by me and had not been permitted this food for this reason, lest you happen upon greater blessings. What grounds would you have for thinking you were deceived by me, the donor of such acts of kindness to you? What great kindness did this indicate, to take early precautions and clearly outline what you must abstain from so as not to fall into the excesses in which you have now immersed yourself? All these warnings, however, you gave no heed to, and so, behold, you have found out for yourself by

10. Cf. 1 Cor 11.3.

experience the seriousness of these sins; so at this point don't lay the blame on your wife alone, but on your own indifference as well.

(20) Accordingly, when he had addressed himself at sufficient length to Adam, and the latter made excuses for his sins by transferring, as he thought, the guilt to his wife, behold (140a) the good Lord, how much considerateness he employs again and deems her also worthy of a response from him: "God said to the woman," the text goes on, "'What is this you have done?'"[11] You heard your husband, he says, transferring the responsibility to you and putting all the blame on you, given to him though you were as his helpmate and created for the purpose of providing him with comfort from your person inasmuch as you have the same being as he and share in the same nature. So why did you do this, O woman? For what reason did you become the cause of such dreadful shame to yourself and your husband? What advantage did you gain from such intemperance? What benefit came to you from the deception which you willingly embraced and made your husband sharer in? So what did the woman reply? "'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" See her overcome by great fear and making excuses for her sins: (140b) just as her husband seemed to transfer the blame to his wife in the words, "'My wife brought it and gave it to me and I ate it,'" so she too, finding no way out admits what happened and says, "'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" That evil creature, she says, brought that disaster upon us, his baleful advice led us to that shame, he deceived me and I ate.

(21) Don't pass these words by heedlessly, dearly beloved; instead, let us study them precisely and gain much benefit from them. I mean, a tribunal is a fearful thing, capable of arousing terror, and we must listen carefully to everything and lay up in our minds the great treasure to be gained from what is said. That is to say, notice the man also saying, "'The woman you gave me as my companion gave it to me, and I ate it.'" No evidence of force, no evidence of pressure—only

11. Gn 3.13.

choice and decision: (140c) simply "gave," not "forced" or "pressured." She in turn in making her excuse didn't say, The serpent forced me and I ate. Instead, what? "'The serpent deceived me.'" She had the choice of being deceived or not being deceived. "'The serpent deceived me,'" she said. In other words, the enemy of our salvation, working through that evil creature, brought forward his advice and deceived her—not forcing or pressuring but through his deadly advice putting his deception into effect after finding the woman easily disposed to embrace the deception and thus deprived of any excuse.

(22) "'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'" Notice, moreover, the good Lord is satisfied with their words and doesn't oblige them to say any more. You see, since he was not unaware of the truth when he asked them, but rather knew, and knew very well, (140d) he shows considerateness for their limitations so as to demonstrate his own loving kindness, and he invites them to make admission of their faults. Hence he asks them nothing further. After all, of course, it was necessary to unmask the kind of deception; but to show us that his questioning did not arise from ignorance, he is satisfied with their words. The woman, remember, in saying, "'The serpent deceived me and I ate,'" hinted at that deadly advice which she had accepted from the devil, namely, You will be like gods after eating it. Did you notice how precisely Adam was questioned? With how much long-suffering the woman also was brought before the tribunal? How each of them made their excuse? Now, then, consider in this passage the surpassing degree of the Judge's ineffable love: when the woman said, "'The serpent deceived me and I ate,'" he doesn't then grant the serpent a reply, nor (141a) give it opportunity for excuse, nor question it as he did the man and woman; instead, he accepts the excuses from them and turns on that creature as the guilty party in all the evils.[12] Since, from his being God, and

12. The risk of Antiochene accent on the literal becoming literalist and failing to acknowledge the figurative character of passages such as these seems to be realized in Chrysostom's commentary on these verses. See Introduction 16.

therefore knowing secret things, he was aware that the serpent was the means of achieving the devil's advice and his envy shown in regard to human beings, his purpose was for you to discover his goodness in the way he addressed himself in their case (despite his knowledge of the facts), to Adam, on the one hand, in the words, "'Where are you? Who told you you are naked?'" and, on the other hand, to the woman in the words, "'Why did you do it?'" whereas in the case of this evil creature he did nothing of the sort. What did he say to him? "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this.'" Do you see the difference? While he said to the woman, "'Why have you done it?'", to the serpent he said, "'Because you have done it.'" Because you have perpetrated this wickedness, he says, because you have adduced this deadly advice, because you have ministered to such envy, because you have whetted your hatred (141b) for this creature of mine, "'Accursed are you beyond all the beasts and all the wild animals of the earth. Upon your belly shall you grovel and slide, and eat dirt all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall watch for your head, and you shall watch for his heel.'"[13]

(23) Notice in this passage, I ask you, the order and sequence illustrating God's loving kindness. I mean, he began directing his enquiries to the man, and then turned his attention to the woman. When she mentioned who was the cause of her fall, he turned to the serpent: not deeming him worth a reply, he sentenced him to his punishment and extended it for all time; in the person of the serpent a lasting instruction was provided for everyone in future never again to accept that deadly (141c) advice nor be deceived by stratagems devised by him.

(24) Perhaps, however, someone may say: if the devil worked

13. Gn 3.14–15. The precise nature of the curse in v.14 emerges not so much from the vocabulary and syntax (which in the Heb. leads Speiser to suggest a translation "banned from" rather than "accursed beyond," and in Chrysostom's LXX is still no clearer) as from the physical effects mentioned in the second half of the verse, as Chrysostom himself comments on below (Migne 142B), where the LXX somewhat embroiders the Heb.

through the serpent to deliver his advice, why was such punishment inflicted on that reptile? This happened as an example of God's loving kindness beyond all telling: just as a loving father punishes the man who killed his own son, and destroys the sword and dagger by which he committed the murder, smashing them into many pieces, in just the same way the good God, too, sentenced this creature to an eternal punishment, when like some sword, he served the purpose of the devil's villainy so that we might reason from this evident and visible punishment to the depths of dishonor in which the devil also found himself. After all, if this creature who played the part of an instrument suffered such frustration, what kind of punishment is it likely that the devil received?

(25) To be more accurate, however, we have already been instructed in this (141d) by Christ when he spoke through the holy Gospels to those standing at his left hand: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."[14] In other words, this fate has been prepared for him from ages past, and that unquenchable fire awaits him. So what could be more pitiful than the fate of those people who on account of neglect of their own salvation make themselves liable to that punishment prepared for that demon? You see, for proof that the kingdom has been prepared for us if we are willing to give evidence of virtue and follow the laws laid down by Christ, listen further to his words: "Come, blessed of my Father: inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."[15] Do you see the unquenchable fire prepared for the demon, on the one hand, and for us, on the other hand, the kingdom, provided our resolve does not fail?

(26) Accordingly, let us keep these things in mind and give heed to our way of living, (142a) avoiding evil and never falling victim to the devil's wiles. On the contrary, with good will and no slackening of effort let us keep before our eyes the punishment inflicted on the serpent so that we may hasten towards the goal of our judgment and see the greatness of God's

14. Mt 25.41. 15. Ib.34.

loving kindness. To draw a comparison: it often happens that when people notice a judge exercising his duties and sentencing the accused, they stay there for the whole day and don't leave until they see the judge rise. Much more should we in this instance watch the good God with greater enthusiasm to see how he imposes that severe penalty on the serpent, on the one hand, for the purpose of providing us, by the means of this corporeal creature which that wicked demon had used like some instrument, with an impression of the punishment the demon was due to receive; and how, on the other hand, in his clemency he imposes a due penalty on the woman and the man (142b)—or an admonition rather than a punishment—with the purpose of our observing everything precisely and marvelling at the concern of the loving God shown in regard to our nature.

(27) So what does the text say? "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, accursed are you beyond all the beasts and all the wild animals of the earth. Upon your belly shall you grovel and slide, and eat dirt all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall watch for your head, and you shall watch for his heel.'" His anger is profound and intense, since profound also was the excess of the deception which the evil demon brought into play through that creature. "The Lord God said to the serpent, (142c) 'Because you have done this.'" Because you were the means of such villainy, he is saying, and put the deception into effect in this way by adducing the deadly advice and mixing the lethal potion; because you did this and intended to expel from my favor those creatures of mine, ministering to the purpose of that evil demon who had been cast down from heaven to earth for his envy and overweening arrogance—hence, because he used you as his instrument in these exploits, I inflict unremitting punishment on you, so that from what has befallen you he, too, may be in a position to know the extent of the punishment awaiting him, and that human beings to come may be instructed never to fall victim to his counsels nor give rein to his deceit lest they incur the same penalties. On this account

you are accursed beyond all the wild animals since you did not employ your cunning as you ought, (142d) instead, the superiority over all the other animals that you enjoyed proved to be the cause of all these evils for you. "The serpent," the text says, remember, "was the most cunning of all the beasts and wild animals of the earth."[16] Hence you have become accursed beyond all the beasts and the wild animals of the earth.

(28) Since, however, the curse was not perceptible to the senses nor visible to the naked eye, he accordingly inflicts on him a visible punishment so that we may have continually before our eyes reminders of his punishment to contemplate. "'Upon your belly shall you grovel and slide, and eat dirt all the days of your life,'" because you took advantage of your physical form improperly, he is saying, even presuming to enter into conversation with the being I had created as rational. So just as the devil who worked through you, employing you as his instrument, had been cast down from heaven for setting his ambitions above his station, well, (143a) in just the same way I direct that you too assume a different physical shape, slide upon the earth and have that diet, so that in future you won't be able to look upwards; instead, it will be your lot ever to be in this lowly position, and unlike all the other animals eat dirt. And not only this, but "'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.'" I'm not even content with this, that you slide on the earth: I will make the woman your implacable enemy, and not simply her, but her seed as well I will cause to be perpetually at odds with your seed. "'He will watch for your head, and you will watch for his heel.'" That is to say, I will supply him with such force that he will constantly threaten your head, whereas you will be trodden under his feet.

(29) See, dearly beloved, (143b) by means of the punishment against this creature, the extent of the care he reveals to us that he has for the human race. So much is evident even in regard to the serpent perceptible to our senses; yet it is also possible to anyone interested to study the sequel to this in

16. Gn 3.1.

what is written, and to know that if this is the story of the serpent that is visible, much more should the words be understood to refer also to the serpent perceptible only to the mind. I mean, this latter he also humbled and put under our feet, and caused us to trample on his head. Does he not indicate this to us in the words, "Walk on serpents and scorpions"[17]? Then, lest we think these words refer to material serpents, he added, "and on all the power of the Enemy." Do you observe from the punishment inflicted on the devil's instrument God's exceeding love?

(30) Let us turn again, if you don't mind, to the woman. You see, since (143c) it was the serpent that was the cause of the deception, accordingly he was the first to incur punishment; and since he deceived her first, and she then dragged her husband down with her, she is punished first, receiving that punishment which carries with it lengthy admonition: "He said to the woman: 'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor, in pain you will bear children; your yearning will be for your husband, and he will be your master.'"[18] See the Lord's goodness, how much mildness he employs despite such a terrible fall. "'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor.'" My intention had been, he is saying, for you to have a life free of trouble and distress, rid of all pain and grief, filled with every pleasure and with no sense of bodily needs despite your bodily condition. But since you misused such indulgence, (143d) and the abundance of good things led you into such ingratitude, accordingly I impose this curb on you to prevent your further running riot, and I sentence you to painful labor. "'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor, in pain you will bear children.'"

(31) I will ensure, he is saying, that the generation of children, a reason for great satisfaction, for you will begin with pain so that each time without fail you will personally have a reminder, through the distress and the pain of each birth, of the magnitude of this sin of disobedience, and may not in the

17. Lk 10.19. 18. Gn 3.16.

course of time allow the event to slip into oblivion, but may be enabled to realize that the deception was the cause of these ills. Hence "'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor, in pain you will bear children.'" In this passage he refers to the pangs of labor and in that great distress there is no avoiding (144a) carrying the child all those months like some load, feeling each twinge of pain that is caused by that, the twitching of its limbs, and the unbearable pangs known only to those who go through the experience.

(32) Nevertheless, however, the loving God offered comfort with the pain, so that the satisfaction of bearing the child equally matched those pangs that tortured the womb all those months. I mean, women who are subjected to such distress, are so tormented by the bouts of pain, and, so to say, even despair of life itself, enjoy after the birth satisfaction even in their distress: as though forgetting all that has happened, they give themselves again to the bearing of children, according to the loving God's providence for the maintenance of human beings' welfare. You see, the expectation of future benefits (144b) makes us always bear the distress of the present time with ease.

(33) You would see this trial affecting travellers as well, as they cross the mighty oceans and put up with shipwreck and pirates; despite those many dangers and the disappointment of their hopes they in no way give up, but rather press on towards the same goal. The same thing can be said also of farmers: when they dig deep furrows, till the earth with great care and sow the seed liberally, there frequently occurs drought or flooding, or at the conclusion of the harvesting rust descends on the crop and they lose hope; yet they still don't give up at this point, but when better times come they resume their farming. (144c) And you would find this happening in the case of every occupation.

(34) Well, in just the same way, woman too, in her turn, despite all those months, despite the unspeakable pains, despite the sleepless nights, despite the twitching of limbs, or through some slight accident she gives birth prematurely to the child

in an undeveloped state and unrecognizable, or if fully developed yet handicapped, or unhealthy, or even in many cases stillborn, scarcely escaping risk to her own life—yet despite all this she puts up with the same trouble again, as though oblivious of all these pangs, and she undergoes the same process again. Why do I say the same process? Often it happens that the woman dies with the child, yet this event does not worry other women or induce them to avoid the experience—such being the pleasure and satisfaction God has combined together with the pains.[19]

(35) Hence he said, "'I will greatly aggravate the pain of your labor, in pain you will bear children.'" This is what Christ also talked about with his disciples, showing them the intensity of the pain and the great degree of satisfaction, when he said, "A woman in labor suffers for the reason that her time has come;" (144d) then, wanting to bring home to us how the element of suffering is suddenly removed whereas its place is taken by joy and happiness, he said, "But when she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the distress for joy that a human being has been born into the world."[20] Do you see the exceeding care? Do you see punishment accompanied by admonition? "'In pain you will bear children;'" then, "'Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will be your master.'"

(36) As if to explain his reasons to the woman, the loving God said this, meaning, In the beginning I created you equal in esteem to your husband, and my intention was that in everything you would share with him as an equal, and as I entrusted control of everything to your husband, so did I to you; but you abused your equality of status. Hence I subject you to your husband: "'Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will be your master.'" Because you abandoned your equal, who was sharer with you in the same nature (145a) and for whom you were created, and you chose to enter into conversa-

19. For all Chrysostom's sexism, he is not insensitive to the female condition and can write feelingly of it.

20. Jn 16.21.

tion with that evil creature the serpent, and to take the advice he had to give, accordingly I now subject you to him in future and designate him as your master for you to recognize his lordship, and since you did not know how to rule, learn well how to be ruled. "'Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will be your master.'" It is better that you be subject to him and fall under his lordship than that enjoying freedom and authority, you would be cast into the abyss. It would be more useful also for a horse to carry the bit and travel under direction than without this to fall down a cliff. Accordingly, considering what is advantageous, I want you to have yearning for him and, like a body being directed by its head, to recognize his lordship pleasurably.

(37) I know that you are wearied by (145b) the excess of words, but stir yourselves a little, I beseech you, lest we leave the sentence incomplete and depart while the judge is still sitting. We are in fact close to the end now. So let us see what he says to the man after the woman, and what kind of punishment he inflicts on him. "Whereas to Adam he said: 'Because you listened to your wife's words and ate from this one tree I told you not to eat from, accursed shall be the soil as you till it. In pain may you eat from it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles let it yield you, and you are to eat the grass of the field. In the sweat of your brow may you eat your bread until you return to the soil whence you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you are to return.'"[21] Great is the (145c) Lord's care and beyond all telling displayed here for the human being—but let us listen precisely to each word spoken. "Whereas to Adam he said: 'Because you listened to your wife's words and ate from this one tree I told you not to eat from.'" Since you listened to your wife, he is saying, and ate from the tree, and put the advice from her ahead of my command and weren't prepared to keep away from this one single tree which I told you not to eat from (surely, after all, I didn't bid you keep away from many? one only, and yet you couldn't

21. Gn 3.17–19, with a particular nuance—or misreading—by the LXX in "as you till it," which Chrysostom naturally retains.

keep away from that, but forgot my commands and were overborne by your wife). Hence you are to learn through your very labors how much evil you have committed.

(38) Let men give good heed, let women give good heed—the former, that they may have nothing to do with those people advising evil actions, and the latter, that they may advise nothing of the sort. (145d) I mean, if Adam shifted the blame on to his wife and was still considered incapable of any excuse, what kind of defense could anyone offer in the claim, "It was on account of my wife that I sinned in this way and that, and committed this sin and that"? After all, the reason that she came under your dominion and you were declared her master was that she should follow your lead, not for the head to follow the feet. Frequently, however, it is possible to see the opposite occurring, that the one who is supposed to be in the position of head doesn't even keep to the position of the feet, whereas she who is in the position of the feet is installed in the position of head. Hence also blessed Paul, the world's teacher, foresaw all this and cried out, "How, after all, can you be sure, wife, whether you will save your husband? And how can you be sure, husband, whether you will save your wife?"[22] Still, let a husband be very much on his guard so as to resist his wife's inducement to harmful behavior, and let a wife (146a) keep fresh in mind the punishment Eve received for plying her husband with harmful advice, and not presume to offer such advice nor imitate Eve, but rather bring him to his senses by her example and encourage him to that kind of behavior that will discharge herself and her husband of any punishment or penalty.

(39) But let us return to the text before us. "Whereas to Adam he said: 'Because you listened to your wife's words and ate from this one tree I told you not to eat from.'" Because, he is saying, you displayed such indifference about keeping the command given by me, and neither fear nor my intervening to decree the punishment liable to happen to you for eating the fruit was of any benefit, but in fact you ran headlong into

22. 1 Cor 7.16.

such terrible wickedness that you were unable to keep away from that single tree despite such great enjoyment, accordingly "'accursed shall be the soil (146b) as you till it.'" See the Lord's loving kindness, how he punishes the serpent one way and this rational being a different way: to the former he says, "'Accursed are you beyond the earth,'" whereas in this case he doesn't speak in that way. What, then? "'Accursed shall be the soil as you till it.'" Appropriately, too. You see, since the soil had been produced for the sake of the human being so that he might thus be able to enjoy what sprang from it, accordingly in turn he places a curse on it on account of the human being's sin; because the curse on it impairs in turn the human being's relaxation and tranquillity, he says, "'Accursed shall be the soil as you till it.'"

(40) Then, so that you may learn what "accursed" means, he added, "'In pain may you eat from it all the days of your life.'" See how each punishment is extended for a lifetime, so that not only may they personally be the better off for it, but that those destined to follow in future may learn from these very events whence the source of this punishment (146c) derived in their case: "'In pain,'" he says, "'may you eat from it all the days of your life.'" Then, to teach us more precisely the kind of curse and the cause of the pain, he added, "'Thorns and thistles let it yield you.'" Behold the reminders of the curse: thorns it will bring forth, he says, and thistles so as to give rise to great labor and discomfort, and I will ensure you pass the whole time with pain so that this experience may prove a brake on your getting ideas above your station and you may instead have a thought to your own make-up and never again bear to be deceived in these matters.

(41) "'You are to eat of the grass of the field. In the sweat of your brow may you eat your bread.'" See how after his disobedience everything is imposed on him in an opposite way to his former life style: My intention in bringing you into the world, he is saying, was that you should live your life without pain or toil, difficulty or sweat, (146d) and that you should be in a state of enjoyment and prosperity, and not be subject to the needs of the body but be free from all such and have the good

fortune to experience complete freedom. Since, however, such indulgence was of no benefit to you, accordingly I curse the ground so that it will not in future yield its harvest as before without tilling and ploughing; instead, I invest you with great labor, toil and difficulty, and with unremitting pain and despair, and I am ensuring that everything you do is achieved only by sweat so that under pressure from these you may have continual guidance in keeping to limits and recognizing your own make-up. Nor will this continue for a short period or a brief space of time: it will last all your life. "'In the sweat of your brow may you eat your bread until you return to the soil whence you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you are to return.'" (147a) You will endure this as long as the span of your life is extended and you decompose into the material you were formed from. You see, even though in my loving kindness I endowed you with a bodily nature, yet your body being from the earth will in turn revert to the earth. "'For dust you are, and to dust you are to return.'" After all, to prevent this happening I said, "'Do not touch the tree,'" explaining that "'on the day you eat of it you will truly die.'" You see, this was not my intention; on the contrary, everything on my part was carried through, but you appropriated it for yourself—so don't attribute the blame to anyone else, but put it down to your own indifference.

(42) At this point, however, a further question arises for us, which, if you don't mind, we'll dispose of immediately at this stage and bring the sermon to a close. God said, the text tells us, "'On the day you eat from it you will truly die;'" (147b) yet they are shown living for a great number of years after the disobedience and tasting the food. This seems to pose a problem for those who read the subject matter superficially; if however you give your attention to it in the proper spirit, the verse is clear and offers no problem to the student. You see, even if they lived a long time, nevertheless from the time they heard the words, "'Dust you are, and to dust you are to return,'" and received the sentence of death, they became liable to death and you would say from that moment they were dead. So this is what Scripture is also implying when it says

that "'on the day you eat, you will truly die'"—that is to say, receive the sentence of being mortal from now on. I mean, just as in the case of human tribunals, when someone receives the sentence of beheading and is cast into prison, (147c) even if he stays there a long time his life is no better than that of dead people and corpses, being already dead by reason of his sentence, in just the same way they, too, from the day they received the sentence of mortality were dead by reason of their sentence, even if they lasted a long time.

(43) I know that our words have been numerous and the thread of our teaching has been drawn out to great length. Hence, since by the grace of God and to the extent of our ability we have proposed everything to you and brought to a conclusion the subject matter we read about, let us at this point close the sermon. It would, in fact, have been possible for us to propose other matters, illustrating further that the imposition of that very punishment and their being made liable to death was a mark of great depths of loving kindness. But in case we smother your thinking with a great surfeit of words, come now, let us encourage you as you leave here (147d) not to give your time to brainless gatherings or to improper gossiping; instead, reflect privately and rehearse with one another what has been said, reminding yourselves of what the judge said in reply, what defense the guilty made, how the man shifted the blame on to the woman and she shifted it to the serpent, how God punished that creature and the fact that he inflicted on it the punishment that would be constant and lasting for all time, that in its regard he delivered a severe denunciation and thus demonstrated his care for those deceived. You see, from the fact that he punished their deceiver it is clear that he had practiced his deception on people very dear to God. Next recall from this text the sentence on the woman, and the punishment inflicted on her, or rather the admonition, and thus recall the words addressed to Adam, (148a) remembering the sentence, "'Dust you are, and to dust you are to return;'" find cause for wonder in this at God's ineffable love, that we, though coming from dust and decomposing into it, are deemed worthy, should we wish to embrace vir-

tue and shun evil, of those unspeakable good things prepared for those who love him, "which eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor have they entered man's heart."[23]

(44) Consequently, we ought to pay the Lord abundant thanks for his so generous favors and never consign them to oblivion; instead, through good works and careful avoidance of foul deeds let us win his approval and render him well disposed to us. I mean, how could we avoid the appearance of ingratitude if, while he who is God and immortal does not decline to take on himself our mortal nature and earthly character, (148b) free us from the ancient curse of death, lead us to highest heaven, honor us with his ancestral home and deem us worthy of being honored by all the heavenly host, whereas we are not ashamed to requite him in just the opposite way, glueing our immortal soul (so to say) on to our body and thus ensuring that it becomes earthly, perishable and impotent? Let us not, I beseech you, be so ungrateful to such a constant benefactor of ours; let us rather keep his laws and perform what he has decided and is well-pleasing to him, so that he may declare us worthy also of eternal goods. May we all be judged deserving of such goods, thanks to the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power and honor, now and forever for ages of ages. Amen.

23. 1 Cor 2.9; cf. Is 64.4; 65.17.